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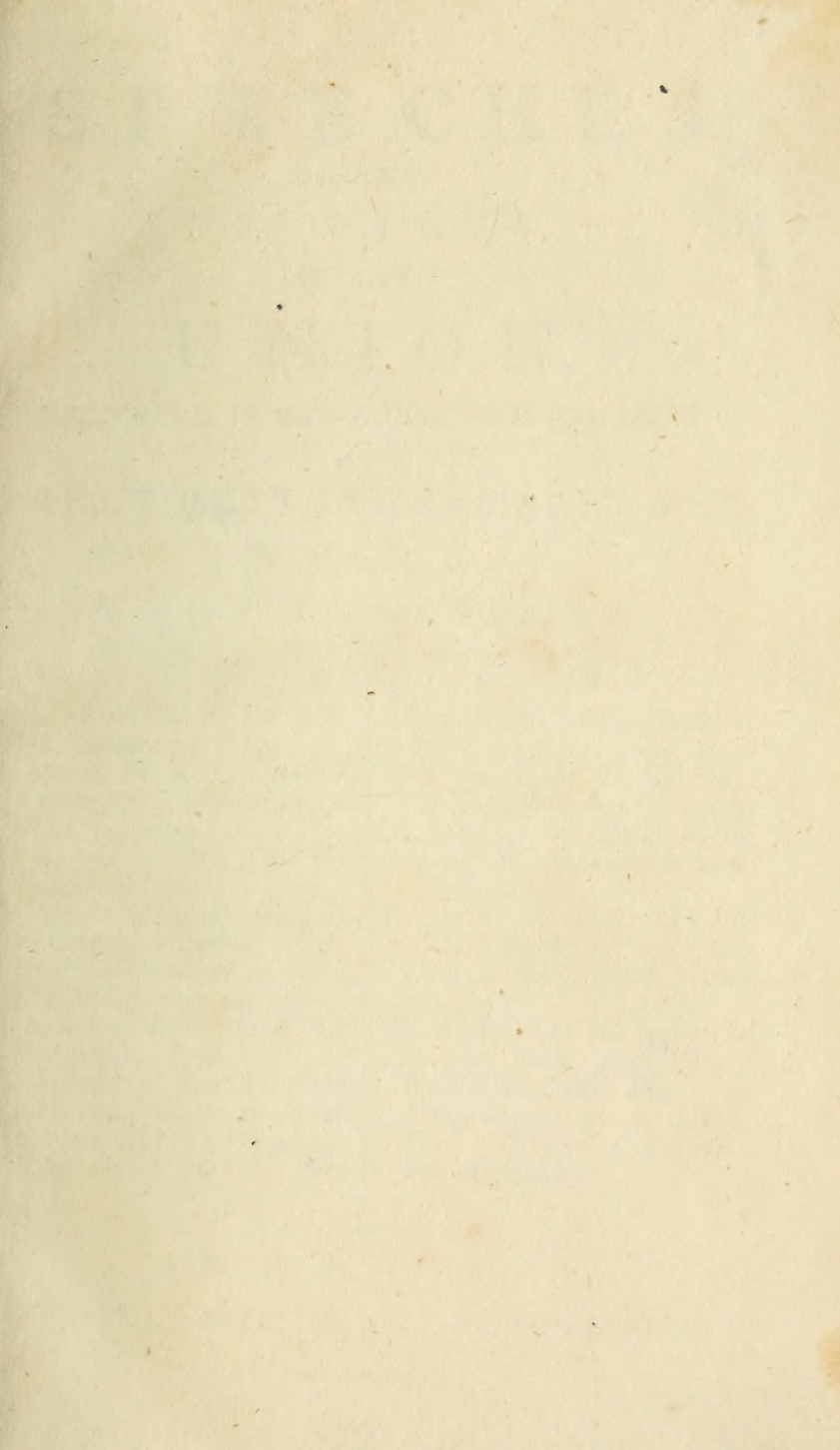


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S P E E C H E S

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OF AN

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DELIVERED IN THE LORDS AND COMMONS

O F

G R E A T B R I T A I N A N D I R E L A N D,

B E I N G

V O L U M E T H E S I X T H

O F U N I O N T R A C T S.

- | | |
|---|---|
| I. Speech of the Rt. Hon. W. Pitt, January 31, 1799. | Lord Minto, in the House of Peers, April 11, 1799. |
| II. Speech of R. B. Sheridan, Esq. in Reply to Mr. Pitt, January 31, 1799. | VIII. Speech of the Rt. Hon. Lord Sheffield, April 22, 1799. |
| III. Speech of Rt. Hon. H. Dundas, January 31, 1799. | IX. Speech of Mr. Dobbs, in the House of Commons of Ireland, March 5, 1799. |
| IV. Speech of the Rt. Hon. H. Addington, Speaker of the House of Commons of Great Britain, February 12, 1799. | X. Speech of the Rt. Hon. J. Forster, Speaker of the House of Commons of Ireland, April 12, 1799. |
| V. Speech of Robt. Peel, Esq. February 14, 1799. | XI. A Review of the Speech of the Rt. Hon. John Foster, by William Smith, Esq. |
| VI. Speech of the Rt. Hon. Lord Auckland, in the House of Peers April 11, 1799. | XII. Speech of the Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount Castlereagh, April 11, 1799. |
| VII. Speech of the Rt. Hon. | |

D U B L I N:

SOLD BY J. MILLIKEN, 32, GRAFTON STREET.

1799.

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THE LORDS AND COMMONS

OF

REPRESENTATIVE AND IRELAND

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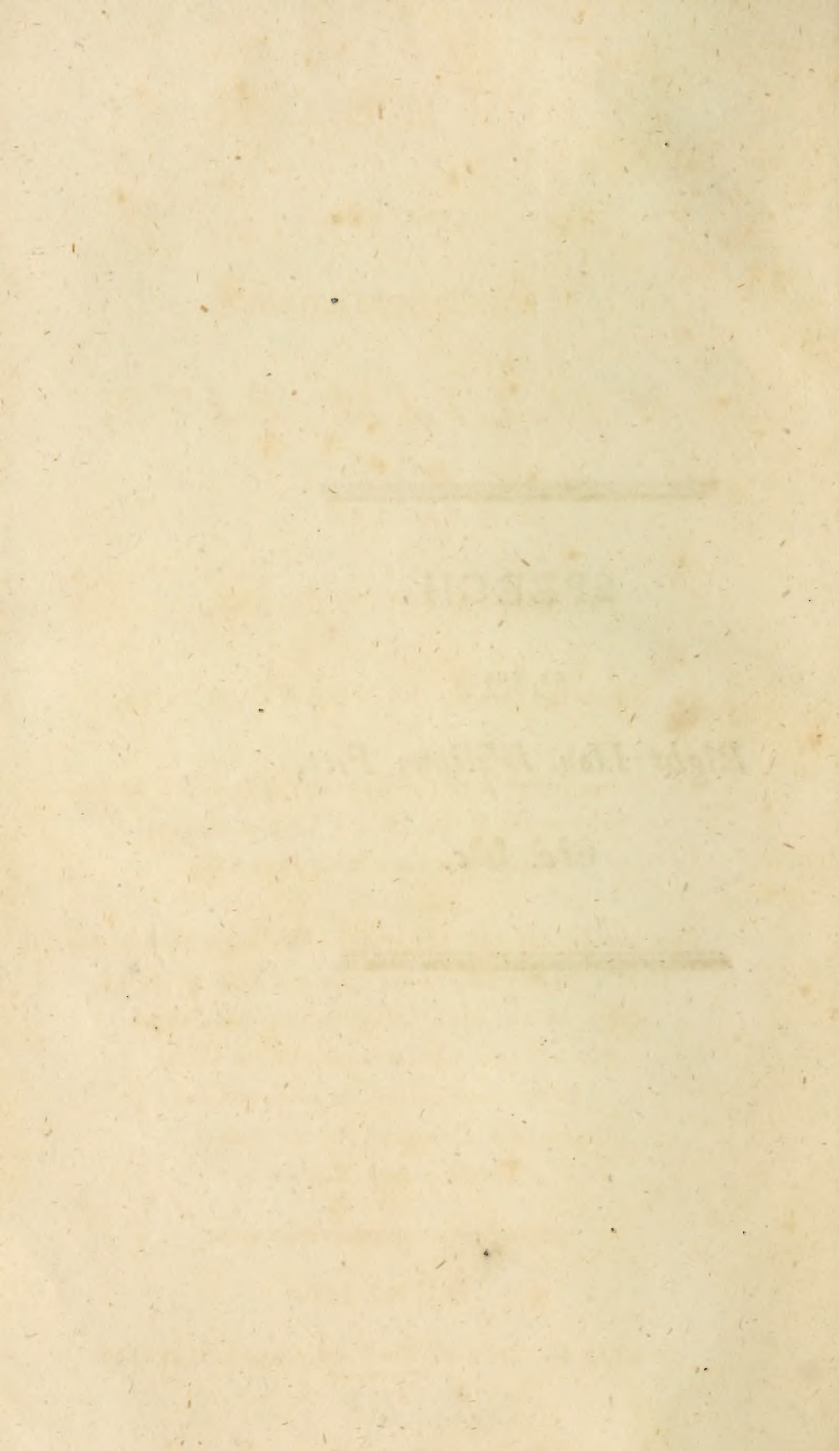
AND BY J. MURPHY, 24, NATION STREET

SPEECH

OF THE

Right Hon. William Pitt,

&c. &c.



S P E E C H

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1799,

*On offering to the House the RESOLUTIONS which he proposed as the BASIS OF AN UNION between
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,*

*To which are added the SPEECHES of the Right Honourable
JOHN FOSTER, on the 12th and 15th of August,
1785, on the BILL for effectuating the INTER-
COURSE and COMMERCE between Great
Britain and Ireland, on permanent and
equitable Principles, for the mutual
Benefit of both Kingdoms.*

DUBLIN:

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1799.

S P E E C H

OF THE

Right Hon. William Pitt,

, &c. &c.

The Speaker having read His MAJESTY'S
MESSAGE, *viz.*

GEORGE REX.

“ His Majesty is persuaded that the unremitting industry
“ with which our enemies persevere in their avowed de-
“ sign of effecting the Separation of Ireland from this
“ Kingdom, cannot fail to engage the particular attention
“ of Parliament; and His Majesty recommends it to this
“ House to consider of the most effectual means of counter-
“ acting and finally defeating this design; and he trusts
“ that a review of all the circumstances which have
“ recently occurred (joined to the sentiment of mutual
“ affection and common interest,) will dispose the Parlia-
“ ment of both Kingdoms to provide, in the manner
B “ which

“ which they shall judge most expedient, for settling such
 “ a complete and final adjustment as may best tend to im-
 “ prove and perpetuate a Connection essential for their
 “ common security, and to augment and consolidate the
 “ Strength, Power, and Resources of the British Empire.”

G. R.

Mr. PITT *rose, and spoke as follows :*

SIR,

WHEN I proposed to the House, the last time this subject was before them, to fix this day for the further consideration of His Majesty's Message, I certainly indulged the hope that the result of a similar communication to the Parliament of Ireland would have opened a more favourable Prospect than at present exists, of the speedy accomplishment of a measure which I then stated, and which I still consider, to be of the greatest importance to the power, the stability, and the general welfare of the Empire ; to the immediate interests of both kingdoms—and more particularly to the peace, the tranquillity, and the safety of Ireland : in this hope, I am sorry to say, I have for the present been disappointed, by the proceedings of the Irish House of Commons, of
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which we have been informed since this subject was last under consideration.

I feel and know that the Parliament of Ireland possesses the power, the intire competence, on the behalf of that country, alike to accept or reject a proposition of this nature—a power which I am by no means inclined to dispute. I see that at the present moment one House of Parliament in Ireland has expressed a repugnance, even to the consideration of this measure.—Feeling, Sir, as I have already stated, that it is important, not only as it tends to the general prosperity of the Empire of Great Britain, but (what, under every situation, must always be to me an object of the greatest moment) feeling that it was designed and calculated to increase the prosperity and ensure the safety of Ireland, I must have seen with the deepest regret that, at the very first moment, and before the nature of the measure could be known, it was so received.

But whatever may have been my feelings upon this subject, knowing that it is the undoubted

right of the Legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt such measures as may appear to them injurious or beneficial, far be it from me to speak of its determination in any other terms but those of respect. Let it not, therefore, be imagined that I am inclined to press any sentiment, however calculated it may appear to me to benefit every member of the Empire, in any manner which may lead to hostile discussion between two kingdoms, whose mutual happiness and safety depend upon their being strictly and cordially united. But while I admit and respect the rights of the Parliament of Ireland, I feel that, as a Member of the Parliament of Great Britain, I also have a Right to exercise, and a Duty to perform. That Duty is to express, as distinctly as I can, the general nature and outline of the Plan, which, in my conscience, I think would tend in the strongest manner to ensure the safety and the happiness of both kingdoms.

While I feel, therefore, that as long as the House of Commons of Ireland view the subject in the light they do at present, there is no chance
of

of its adoption, I do not think that I ought on that account to abstain from submitting it to the consideration of this Parliament; on the contrary I think it only the more necessary to explain distinctly the principles of the Measure, and to state the grounds upon which it appears to me to be entitled to the approbation of the Legislature.

If Parliament, when it is in possession of the basis upon which this Plan is founded, and of its general outline, should be of opinion with me, that it is founded upon fair, just, and equitable principles, calculated to produce mutual advantages to the two Kingdoms—if Parliament, I say, upon full explanation, and after mature deliberation, should be of that opinion, I should propose that its determination should remain recorded as that by which the Parliament of Great Britain were ready to abide, leaving it to the Legislature of Ireland to reject or to adopt hereafter, upon a full consideration of the subject.

There is no man will deny that in a great question of this nature, involving in it objects
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which, in the first instance, are more likely to be decided upon by passion than by judgment; in a question in which an honest but, I must be allowed to say, a mistaken sense of National Pride is so likely to operate, that much misconception and misconception must inevitably happen. It therefore becomes the more necessary that the intentions of the Government which proposes the Measure, and the principles of the Measure itself, should be distinctly understood. But, Sir, in stating that intention and those principles, I look to something more than a mere vindication of Government for having proposed the Measure. I do entertain a confidence, even under the apparent discouragement of the opinion expressed by the Irish House of Commons, that this Measure is founded upon such clear, such demonstrable grounds of utility, is so calculated to add to the strength and power of the Empire, (in which the safety of Ireland is included, and from which it never can be separated) and is attended with so many advantages to Ireland in particular, that all that can be necessary for its ultimate adoption is, that it should be stated distinctly, temperately, and fully, and that it should be left to unprejudiced,

diced, the dispassionate, the sober judgment of the Parliament of Ireland. I wish that those whose interests are involved in this measure should have time for its consideration—I wish that time should be given to the Landed, to the Mercantile and Manufacturing Interest, that they should look at it with all its bearings, and that they should coolly examine and sift the popular arguments by which it has been opposed, and that then they should give their deliberate and final judgment.

I am the more encouraged in this hope of the ultimate success of this measure, when I see, notwithstanding all the prejudices which it has excited, that barely more than one-half of the members that attended the House of Commons were adverse to it; and that in the other House of Parliament in Ireland, containing, as it does, so large a portion of the property of the kingdom, it was approved of by a large majority.—When I have reason to believe that the sentiments of a large part of the People of that Country are favourable to it; and that much of the Manufacturing, and of the Commercial Interest of Ireland are already sensible
how

how much it is calculated to promote their advantage, I think, when it is more deliberately examined, and when it is seen in what temper it is here proposed and discussed, that it will still terminate in that which can alone be a fortunate result.

It would be vain indeed to hope that a proposition upon which prejudices are so likely to operate, and which is so liable to misconception, should be unanimously approved. But the approbation I hope for is, that of the Parliament of Ireland, and of the intelligent part of the Public of that Country. It is with a view to this object that I think it my duty to bring this measure forward at present; not for the sake of urging its immediate adoption, but that it may be known and recorded; that the intention of the British Parliament may be known, in the hope that it will produce similar sentiments among our Countrymen in Ireland. With this view it is my intention not to go at present into any detailed statement of the plan, because should it ultimately be adopted, the minuter parts must necessarily become the objects of much distinct discussion; but to give such a general statement of the nature of
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the measure as will enable the House to form a correct judgment upon it.

I shall therefore, Sir, before I sit down, open to the House a string of Resolutions, comprising the general heads of this plan. It will be necessary for me, for the purpose of discussing those Resolutions with regularity and convenience, to move that the House should resolve itself into a Committee. And I have already stated, that it is not my intention then to press the Committee to come to an immediate decision upon the Resolutions; but if, upon full and deliberate examination, the Resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose, and which contain as much as is necessary for an outline of the plan, shall be approved, my opinion is, that nothing can contribute more to obviate any doubts and dissatisfaction which may exist, than that Parliament should adopt those Resolutions, and that it should then humbly leave them at the foot of the Throne, leaving it to HIS MAJESTY'S wisdom to communicate them to the Parliament of Ireland, whenever circumstances should appear favourable to such a Measure. I shall therefore, Sir, proceed as

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shortly

shortly as I can to state to the House the nature of the Resolutions, and of the Address which I shall propose to accompany them, if it should be the pleasure of the House to adopt them.

Having now, Sir, explained to the House the mode I mean to pursue, and my reasons for persisting, under the present circumstances, in submitting this Measure to the consideration of Parliament, I will endeavour to state the general grounds on which it rests, the general arguments by which it is recommended, and to give a short view of the particulars of the Plan.

As to the general principle upon which the whole of this Measure is founded, I am happy to observe, from what passed upon a former occasion, that there is not a probability of any difference of opinion. The general principle, to which both sides of the House perfectly acceded, is, that a perpetual Connection between Great Britain and Ireland was essential to the interests of both. The only Honourable Gentleman who, when this subject was before the House on a former

former day, opposed the consideration of the Plan altogether, stated, in terms as strong as I could wish, the necessity of preserving the strictest Connection between the two Countries. I most cordially agree with him in that opinion, but I then stated, that I do not barely wish for the maintenance of that Connection as tending to add to the general strength of the Empire, but I wish for the maintenance of it with a peculiar regard to the local interests of Ireland, with a regard to every thing that can give to Ireland its due weight and importance, as a great member of the Empire. I wish for it with a view of giving to that Country the means of improving all its great natural Resources, and of giving it a full participation of all those blessings which this Country so eminently enjoys.

Considering the subject in this point of view, and assuming it as a proposition not to be controverted, that it is the duty of those who wish to promote the Interest and Prosperity of both Countries, to maintain the strongest connection between them, let me ask, what is the situation of Affairs that has called us to the discussion of this subject?

subject? This very connection, the necessity of which has been admitted on all hands, has been attacked by Foreign Enemies, and by Domestic Traitors. The dissolution of that connection is the great object of the hostility of the common Enemies of both Countries, it is almost the only remaining hope with which they now continue the contest. Baffled and defeated as they have hitherto been, they still retain the hope, they are still meditating attempts, to dissolve that connection. God grant that in this instance the same favour of Divine Providence, which has in so many instances protected this Empire, may again interpose in our favour, and that the attempts of the Enemy to separate the two Countries, may tend ultimately to knit them more closely together, to strengthen a Connection, the best pledge for the happiness of both, and so add to that power which forms the chief barrier to the civilized world, against the destructive principles, the dangerous projects, and the unexampled usurpation of France. This Connection has been attacked not only by the avowed Enemies of both Countries, but by internal Treason, acting in concert with the designs of the Enemy. Internal
Treason,

Treason, which ingrafted Jacobinism on those diseases which necessarily grew out of the State and Condition of Ireland.

Thinking, then, as we all must think, that a close Connection with Ireland is essential to the interests of both Countries, and seeing how much this Connection is attacked, let it not be insinuated that it is unnecessary, much less improper, at this arduous and important crisis, to see whether some new arrangements, some fundamental regulations, are not necessary, to guard against the threatened danger. The foreign and domestic Enemies of these kingdoms have shewn, that they think this the vulnerable point in which they may be most successfully attacked; let us derive advantage, if we can, from the hostility of our Enemies — let us profit by the designs of an Enemy, who, if his conduct displays no true wisdom, at least possesses in an eminent degree that species of wisdom which is calculated for the promotion of mischief. They know upon what footing that Connection rests at this moment between the two Countries, and they feel the most ardent hope, that the two Parliaments will be infatuated enough

enough not to render their designs abortive, by fixing that Connection upon a more solid basis.

These circumstances I am sure will not be denied. And if upon other grounds we had any doubt, these circumstances alone ought to induce us, deliberately and dispassionately, to review the situation of the two Countries, and to endeavour to find out a proper remedy for an evil, the existence of which is but too apparent. It requires but a moment's reflection, for any man who has marked the progress of events, to decide upon the true state and character of this Connection. It is evidently one which does not afford that security which, even in times less dangerous and less critical than the present, would have been necessary, to enable the empire to avail itself of its strength and its resources.

When I last addressed the House on this subject, I stated that the settlement, which was made in 1782, so far from deserving the name of a Final Adjustment, was one that left the Connection between Great Britain and Ireland exposed to all the attacks of Party, and all the effects of accident.

accident. That Settlement consisted in the demolition of the System which before held the two Countries together. Let me not be understood as expressing any regret at the termination of that System. I disapproved of it, because I thought it was one unworthy the liberality of Great Britain, and injurious to the interests of Ireland. But to call that a System in itself—to call that a glorious fabric of human wisdom—which is no more than the mere demolition of another System—is a perversion of terms which, however prevalent of late, can only be the effect of gross misconception, or of great hypocrisy. We boast that we have done every thing, when we have merely destroyed all that before existed, without substituting any thing in its place. Such was the *Final Adjustment* of 1782; and I can prove it to be so, not only from the plainest reasoning, but I can prove it by the opinion expressed by the British Parliament at that very time. I can prove it by the opinion expressed by those very Ministers by whom it was proposed and conducted. I can prove it by the opinion of that very Government who boast of having effected a *Final Adjustment*. I refer, for what I have said, to proofs which they will find it
 very

very difficult to answer; I mean their own acts, which will plainly shew that they were of opinion that a new System would be necessary. But, Sir, I will go farther—I will also produce the authority of one of those whose influence, on the present occasion, has been peculiarly exerted to prevent the discussion of the question in Ireland—of one, of whom I do not wish to speak but with respect, but for whom, nevertheless, I should convey an idea of more respect, than I can now feel to be due to him, if I were merely to describe him as the person who fills the same situation, in the House of Commons of Ireland, which you, Sir, hold among us, and of which on all occasions *you* discharge the duties with a dignity and impartiality which reflects so much credit on yourself, and so well supports the character and authority of the House.

On a former night, I read an Extract from the Journals, to shew what was the opinion even of those by whom the Final Adjustment was proposed, of that Measure. It would there appear, that the Message was sent to the Parliament of Ireland, recommending to them the adoption of
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some Plan for a Final Adjustment between the two Countries, and wishing to know what were the grounds of the grievances of which Ireland complained. In answer to this Message, the Parliament of Ireland stated certain grievances, the principal of which was, the power claimed by the Parliament of Great Britain of making Laws to bind Ireland ; but, with respect to that part of the Message which related to the propriety of adopting some Measures for a final adjustment between the two Countries, they were wholly silent. This Address was laid before the Parliament of Great Britain, to whom a similar Message had been sent, and on that ground was moved the Repeal of what was called the Declaratory Act, which Motion was assented to by the British Parliament. This satisfaction was complete to Ireland, as far as related to the grievance of which her Parliament had complained, viz. the Power of the British Parliament of making Laws for Ireland, because, by the Repeal of the Declaratory Act, that power was given up. But so far was the Minister of that day from considering that the Repeal of that Law finally terminated all differences, and established the Connection between the two Coun-

tries upon a solid basis, that he thought it necessary to move that a farther Settlement was indispensable for the maintenance of that Connection.

[Mr. SHERIDAN across the Table, desired that that part of the Journals to which Mr. PITT alluded, might be read.]

Mr. PITT continued. Sir, I have stated the substance of the Journals correctly ; they were read on a former night, and the Honourable Gentleman may, if he chooses, have them read again.* If he does he will find that they fully justify the statement I have made, but I beg that at present I may not be interrupted. I do maintain, that upon a reference to the Journals of the period to which I have alluded, it will appear that a farther agreement between Great Britain and Ireland is there stated, in the opinion of the Administration of the day, to be absolutely necessary.

I beg farther to state, that after the Bill of which so much has been said, was passed, an Address to HIS MAJESTY was moved and carried, praying him to take such further measures as to him seemed proper, to strengthen the Connection

* Vide Appendix.

between

between the two Countries. HIS MAJESTY'S most Gracious Answer, stating, that in compliance with the Address, he would immediately take such measures as might be necessary for that purpose, was delivered to the House by an Honourable Gentleman who then filled the office of Secretary of State, and whom we have not lately seen in the House, though he still continues to be a Member of it. I do assert, without the least fear of contradiction from any Gentleman whatever, that it was in the contemplation of the Government of that day, to adopt some measures of the nature alluded to in the Address; since that period, however, no such measure has been taken. I do also maintain, that that very system which by these very Ministers who brought it forward was found to be imperfect, even for the purpose of maintaining the Connection between the two Countries, remains at this moment in the same imperfect state. It leaves the two Countries with separate and independent Legislatures, connected only with this tie, that the Third Estate in both Countries is the same—that the Executive Government is the same—that the Crown exercises its power of assenting to Irish Acts of Parliament

under the Great Seal of Great Britain, and by the advice of British Ministers.

This is the only principle of Connection which is left by the Final Adjustment of 1782. Whether this is a sufficient tie to unite them in time of Peace ; whether in time of War it is sufficient to consolidate their strength against a Common Enemy ; whether it is sufficient to guard against those local jealousies which must necessarily sometimes exist between countries so connected ; whether it is calculated to give to Ireland all the important commercial and political advantages which she would derive from a closer Connection with Great Britain ; whether it can give to both Nations that degree of strength and prosperity which must be the result of such a Measure as the present, I believe need only to be stated to be decided.

But I have already said, that I have upon this point, the authority of an opinion to which I before alluded—an opinion delivered upon a very important Measure, very soon after the Final Adjustment of 1782. The Measure to which I refer, was that of the Commercial Propositions which

were

were brought forward in 1785. I am not now going to enter into a discussion of the merits of that Measure. The best, perhaps, that can be said of it is, that it went as far as circumstances would then permit, to draw the two Countries to a closer Connection. But those who think that the Adjustment of 1782 was final, and that it contained all that was necessary for the establishment of the Connection between the two Countries upon a firm basis, can hardly contend that the Commercial Propositions of 1785 were necessary to prevent the danger of separation between the two Countries, and to prevent the conflicting operation of Independent Legislatures. Yet, if I am not mistaken, there will be found, upon a reference to better Records than those in which Parliamentary Debates are usually stated (I mean a statement of what passed in the discussion upon those Propositions fourteen years ago, made, as I have understood, by some of the principal parties themselves) that the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER of that day in Ireland, in a Debate upon the Irish Propositions, held this language—"If this infatuated Country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain." Here the

Right

Right Honourable Gentleman was happily mistaken ; Ireland has again had the offer of the same advantages, but more complete, and in all respects better calculated to attain their object ; and this offer the Right Honourable Gentleman has exerted all his influence to reject. But he goes on to say—" THINGS CANNOT REMAIN AS THEY ARE—Commercial jealousy is roused— it will encrease with *two independent Legislatures* —and without an united interest in commerce, in a commercial Empire, political Union will receive many shocks, and *separation of interest* must threaten *separation of Connection*, which every *honest Irishman* must shudder to look at, as a possible event."

Gentlemen will have the goodness to observe, that I am not now quoting these expressions as pledges given by that Right Honourable Gentleman that he would support a proposal for a Union between the two Countries, but I am adducing them to prove that the situation of the two Countries after the Final Adjustment of 1782, was such, in his opinion, as led to the danger of a separation between them. I am not now arguing
that

that a Legislative Union is the only measure which can possibly be adopted, but I am contending that the Adjustment of 1782 was never considered as final, by those who now state it to be so as an argument against the consideration of the present measure. How the Honourable Gentleman on the other side of the House will evade this authority I do not know ;—an authority too, which, I must observe, he seems much more inclined to treat with respect than he was formerly.

But, Sir, it does not stop there. What is the evil to which he alludes ? Commercial jealousies between two Countries acting upon the laws of two independent Legislatures, and from the danger of those Legislatures acting with jealousy to each other.—How can this evil be remedied ? By two means only ; either by some Compact entered into by the Legislatures of the two Countries respecting the mode of forming their commercial regulations, or else by blending the two Legislatures together ; these are the only two means. I defy the wit of man to point out a third. The mode of compact was proposed in 1785, but unfortunately, in spite of that Right Honourable

Gentleman's

Gentleman's eloquence and authority, who then stated the importance of guarding against the evil, it so happened that doctrines, derived chiefly from this side of the water, succeeded in convincing the Parliament of Ireland, that it would be inconsistent with their independence, to enter into any compact whatever. We have then the authority of that Rt. Honourable Gentleman to whom I have so often alluded, that the unsettled state in which the matter was left, would give, "Political Union many shocks, and lead to a separation of Connection." The experiment of a mutual Compact has been tried without success; the arrangement of that sort, which was proposed in 1785, in order to obviate the inconveniences stated by the Right Honourable Gentleman, was then attacked with the same success against his authority, as another and more effectual remedy has recently experienced under his auspices. The result then is, you must remain in the state which that Right Honourable Gentleman has described, with the seeds of separation in the system now established, and with the Connection, on which the mutual prosperity of both Countries depends in danger of being hourly dissolved, or you must again

recur

recur to the proposal of a compact similar to that rejected in 1785, or you must resort to the best and most effectual remedy,--A LEGISLATIVE UNION.

I have dwelt longer, perhaps, upon this part of the subject than was absolutely necessary, because I believe there is scarcely any man who has ever asked himself, whether there is a solid, permanent system of Connection between the two Countries, who could, upon reflection, answer the question in the affirmative. But besides the authorities of the persons who made the arrangement in 1782, and of those who have since treated of it, to shew that it was not deemed to be final and complete ; I have further the test of experience to shew how imperfect it was, and how inadequate in practice to the great object of cementing the Connection, and placing it beyond the danger of being dissolved. In the single instance, which has occurred (and that a melancholy one which all of us deplored) in which we could feel the effects of two jarring Legislatures we did feel it. On that occasion, it might have produced the most signal calamities, had we not

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been

been rescued from its danger by an event, to which no man can now look back without feeling the utmost joy and exultation; feelings, which subsequent circumstances have served to heighten and confirm. Every Gentleman will know, that I must allude to the Regency. With two independent Legislatures, acting upon different principles, it was accident alone that preserved the identity of the Executive Power, which is the bond and security of the Connection: And even then the Executive authority, though vested in one person, would have been held by him by two different tenures, by one tenure in England, by another in Ireland, had not the interposition of Providence prevented a circumstance pregnant with the most imminent perils, and which might have operated to a separation of the two kingdoms.

After seeing the recorded opinion of Parliament, of those who made the arrangement of 1782, and after the decided testimony of experience on the subject, within the short period of sixteen years, perhaps, it is hardly necessary to appeal to farther
proofs

proofs of its inadequacy, or to desire Gentlemen to look forward to possible cases, which I could easily put, and which will naturally suggest themselves to the minds of all, who chuse to turn their attention to the subject.

But when we consider the distinct powers possessed by the two Legislatures on all the great questions of Peace and War, of alliances and confederacies,—(for they each have in principle, a right to discuss them and decide upon them, though one of them has hitherto been wisely restrained by discretion, from the exercise of that right),—have we not seen circumstances to induce us to think it possible, at least, that on some of these important questions the opinions and decisions of the two Parliaments might have been at variance? Are we talking of an indissoluble Connection, when we see it thus perpetually liable to be endangered? Can we really think that the interests of the Empire, or of its different branches rest upon a safe and solid basis at present? I am anxious to discuss this point closely with any man, either here or in Ireland. Will

it be said, that the Parliament of the latter Country is bound by our decision on the question of Peace or War? And if not so bound, will any man, looking at human Nature as it is, contend, that there is a sufficient certainty that the decision on that important subject will always be the same in both countries? I should be glad to receive a distinct answer to this question, from the Honourable Gentleman who has declared himself to be as warm a friend to the Connection between the two Countries as I am.

Suppose, for instance, that the present war, which the Parliament of Great Britain considers to be just and necessary, had been voted by the Irish Parliament, to be unjust, unnecessary, extravagant, and hostile to the principles of humanity and freedom.—Would that Parliament have been bound by this Country? If not;—what security have we, at a moment the most important to our common interest and common salvation, that the two Kingdoms should have but one friend and foe? I repeat it; I am eager to hear what can be said in justification of a basis so imperfect and unfound,

found, and liable to be shaken by so many accidents. I have already observed, that in the peculiar circumstances of the present moment, we may find strong reasons to prove the necessity of correcting the system of Connection between this Country and Ireland, of supplying its imperfections, and strengthening its weakness, than are to be found at any former period.

Having thus stated, and I think sufficiently proved, that the Settlement of 1782, in every point of view in which it can be considered, is imperfect, and inadequate to the object of maintaining the connection between the two kingdoms, I proceed next to the circumstances which peculiarly call upon us at the present moment to remedy that imperfection.

This Country is at this time engaged in the most important, and momentous conflict that ever occurred in the History of the World; a conflict in which Great Britain is distinguished for having made the only manly and successful stand against the common enemies of civilized society. We see the point in which that Enemy think us the
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most affailable—Are we not then bound in policy and prudence, to strengthen that vulnerable point, involved as we are in a contest of Liberty against Despotism—of Property against Plunder and Rapine—of Religion and Order against Impiety and Anarchy? There was a time when this would have been termed declamation; but, unfortunately, long and bitter experience has taught us to feel that it is only the feeble and imperfect representation of those calamities (the result of French Principles and French Arms) which are attested by the wounds of a bleeding world.

Is there a man who does not admit the importance of a measure which, at such a crisis, may augment the strength of the Empire, and thereby ensure its safety? Would not that benefit to Ireland be of itself so solid, so inestimable, that, in comparison with it, all Commercial Interests, and the preservation of local habits and manners, would be trifling, even if they were endangered by the present measure;—which they undoubtedly are not? The people of Ireland are proud, I believe, of being associated with us in the great contest in which we are engaged, and must feel the

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the advantage of augmenting the general force of the Empire. That the present measure is calculated to produce that effect, is a proposition which I think cannot be disputed. There is not in any Court of Europe a Statesman so ill informed as not to know, that the general power of the Empire would be increased to a very great extent indeed, by such a consolidation of the strength of the two kingdoms. In the course of the Century every writer of any information on the subject has held the same language, and in the general strength of the Empire both Kingdoms are more concerned than in any particular interests which may belong to either. If we were to ask the Ministers of our Allies, what measure they thought the most likely to augment the power of the British Empire, and consequently increase that strength by which they were now protected—if we were to ask the Agent of our Enemies, what measure would be the most likely to render their designs abortive—the answer would be the same in both cases, viz. the firm consolidation of every part of the Empire.

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There is another consideration well worth attention. Recollect what are the peculiar means by which we have been enabled to resist the unequalled and eccentric efforts of France, without any diminution, nay, with an increase, of our general prosperity—what, but the great Commercial Resources which we possess? A Measure, then, which must communicate to such a mighty Limb of the Empire as Ireland, all the Commercial advantages which Great Britain possesses, which will open the markets of the one Country to the other, which will give them both the common use of their Capital, must, by diffusing a large portion of wealth into Ireland, considerably increase the Resources, and consequently the strength, of the whole Empire.

But it is not merely in this general view, that I think the Question ought to be considered.—We ought to look to it with a view peculiarly to the permanent Interest and security of Ireland. When that Country was threatened with the double danger of hostile attacks by Enemies without, and of Treason within, from what quarter did she
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derive the means of her deliverance?—from the Naval Force of Great Britain—from the voluntary exertions of her Military of every description, not called for by Law—and from her pecuniary resources, added to the loyalty and energy of the Inhabitants of Ireland itself;—of which it is impossible to speak with too much praise, and which shews how well they deserve to be called the Brethren of Britons. Their own courage might, perhaps have ultimately succeeded, in repelling the dangers by which they were threatened, but it would have been after a long contest, and after having waded through seas of blood. Are we sure that the same ready and effectual assistance which we have happily afforded, on the present occasion, will be always equally within our power? Great Britain has always felt a common interest in the safety of Ireland; but that common interest was never so obvious and urgent as when the Common Enemy made her attack upon Great Britain, through the medium of Ireland, and when their attack upon Ireland went to deprive her of her Connection with Great Britain, and to substitute in stead, the new Government of the French Republic. When that danger threatened Ireland,

the purse of Great Britain was open for the wants of Ireland, as for the necessities of England.

I do not, Sir, state these circumstances, as upbraiding Ireland for the benefits we have conferred; far from it; but I state them with pleasure, as shewing the friendship and good will with which this Country has acted towards her. But if struggles of this sort may and must return again, if the worst dangers are those which are yet to come, dangers which may be greater from being more disguised—if those situations may arise when the same means of relief are not in our power, what is the remedy that reason and policy point out? It is to identify them with us—it is to make them part of the same Community, by giving them a full share of those accumulated blessings which are diffused throughout Great Britain; it is, in a word, by giving them a full participation of the Wealth, the Powers and the Glory of the British Empire. If then this Measure comes recommended not only by the obvious defects of the system which now exists, but that it has also the pre-eminent recommendation of increasing the general power of the Empire, and of guarding
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against future danger from the Common Enemy, we are next to consider it as to its effects upon the internal condition of Ireland.

I know perfectly well, that as long as Ireland is separated from Great Britain, any attempt on our part to provide measures which we might think salutary, as respecting questions of contending sects or parties, of the claimed rights of the Catholics, or of the precautions necessary for the security of the Protestants—I know that all these, though they may have been brought forward by the very persons who are the advocates of the Final Adjustment in 1782, were, in fact, attacks upon the Independence of the Irish Parliament, and attempts to usurp the Right of deciding on points which can only be brought within our province by compact. Until the Kingdoms are united, any attempt to make regulations here for the internal state of Ireland must certainly be a violation of her Independence. But feeling as I do, for their interests and their welfare, I cannot be inattentive to the events that are passing before me; I must therefore repeat, that whoever looks at the circumstances to which I have alluded—whoever considers that the Enemy

have shewn by their conduct, that they considered Ireland as the weakest and most vulnerable part of the Empire ; whoever reflects upon those dreadful and inexcusable cruelties instigated by the Enemies of both Countries, and upon those lamentable severities by which the exertions for the defence of Ireland were unhappily, but unavoidably, attended, and the necessity of which is itself one great aggravation of the Crimes and Treasons which led to them, must feel that, as it now stands composed, in the hostile division of its Sects, in the animosities existing between ancient Settlers and original Inhabitants, in the ignorance and want of Civilization, which marks that Country more than almost any other Country in Europe, in the unfortunate prevalence of Jacobin Principles, arising from these causes, and augmenting their malignity, and which have produced that distressed state which we now deplore ; every one, I say, who reflects upon all these circumstances, must agree with me in thinking, that there is no cure but in the formation of a General Imperial Legislature, free alike from terror and from resentment, removed from the danger and agitation, and uninflamed by the prejudices and passions of that distracted Country.

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I know that it is impossible, if we wish to consider this subject properly, to consider it in any other point of view than as it affects the Empire in general. I know that the interests of the two Countries must be taken together, and that a man cannot speak as a true Englishman, unless he speaks as a true Irishman, nor as a true Irishman, unless he speaks as a true Englishman: But if it was possible to separate them, and I could consider myself as addressing you, not as interested for the Empire at large, but for Ireland alone, I should say, that it would be indispensably necessary, for the sake of that Country, to compose its present distractions, by the adoption of another system:—I should say, that the establishment of an Imperial Legislature was the only means of healing its wounds and of restoring it to tranquillity. I must here take the liberty of alluding to some topics which were touched upon during the discussion of the former night.

Among the great and known defects of Ireland, one of the most prominent features is, its want of industry and a capital; how are those wants to be supplied, but by blending more closely with
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Ireland, the industry and the capital of this Country. But, above all, in the great leading distinctions between the People of Ireland, I mean their religious distinctions, what is their situation?—The Protestant feels that the claims of the Catholics threaten the existence of the Protestant ascendancy; while, on the other hand, the great body of Catholics feel the establishment of the National Church, and their exclusion from the exercise of certain rights and privileges, a grievance. Between the two, it becomes a matter of difficulty in the minds of many persons, whether it would be better to listen only to the fears of the former, or to grant the claims of the latter.

I am well aware that the subject of religious distinction is a dangerous and delicate topic, especially when applied to a country such as Ireland; the situation of which is different in this respect from that of every other. Where the established religion of the State is the same as the general religion of the Empire, and where the property of the Country is in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons professing that established religion, while the religion of a great
majority

majority of the people is different, it is not easy to say, on general principles, what system of Church Establishments in such a Country would be free from difficulty and inconvenience. By many I know it will be contended, that the religion professed by a majority of the people, would at least be entitled to an equality of Privileges. I have heard such an argument urged in this House; but those who apply it without qualification to the case of Ireland, forget surely the principles on which English Interest and English Connection has been established in that Country, and on which its present Legislature is formed. No man can say, that, in the present state of things, and while Ireland remains a separate kingdom, full concessions could be made to the Catholics, without endangering the State, and shaking the Constitution of Ireland to its centre.

On the other hand, without anticipating the discussion, or the propriety of agitating the question, or saying how soon or how late it may be fit to discuss it; two propositions are indisputable: First, When the conduct of the Catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the Government to
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admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the Established Religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favourable to such a measure. When these events take place, it is obvious that such a question may be agitated in an United, Imperial Parliament, with much greater safety, than it could be in a separate Legislature. In the second place, I think it certain that, even for whatever period it may be thought necessary, after the Union, to withhold from the Catholics the enjoyment of those advantages, many of the objections which at present arise out of their situation would be removed, if the Protestant Legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and Imperial; and the Catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of complaint.

How far, in addition to this great and leading consideration, it may also be wise and practicable to accompany the measure by some mode of relieving the lower orders from the pressure of Tithes, which in many instances operate at present as a great practical evil, or to make--under
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proper Regulations, and without breaking in on the security of the present Protestant Establishment an effectual and adequate provision for the Catholic Clergy, it is not now necessary to discuss. It is sufficient to say, that these and all other subordinate points connected with the same subject, are more likely to be permanently and satisfactorily settled by an United Legislature, than by any local arrangements. On these grounds I contend, that with a view to providing an effectual remedy for the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, with a view of removing those causes which have endangered, and still endanger its security, the measure which I am now proposing promises to be more effectual than any other which can be devised, and on these grounds alone, if there existed no other, I should feel it my duty to submit it to the House

But, Sir, though what I have thus stated relates most immediately to the great object of healing the dissensions, and providing for the internal tranquillity of Ireland; there are also other objects which, though comparatively with this of inferior importance, are yet in them-

selves highly material, and in a secondary view, well worthy of attention.

I have heard it asked, when I pressed the measure, what are the positive advantages that Ireland is to derive from it? To this very question I presume the considerations which I have already urged afford a sufficient answer. But, in fact, the question itself is to be considered in another view; and it will be found to bear some resemblance to a question which has been repeatedly put, by some of the Gentlemen opposite to me, during the last six years. What are the advantages which Great Britain has gained by the present war with France?

To this, the brilliant successes of the British army by sea and land, our unexampled naval victories over all our enemies, the solid acquisition of valuable territory, the general increase of our power, the progressive extension of our commerce, and a series of events more glorious than any that ever adorned the page of our history, afford at once an ample and a satisfactory answer. But there is another general answer which we
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have uniformly given, and which would alone be sufficient: it is, that we did not enter into this war for any purpose of ambition; our object was not to acquire, but to preserve; and in this sense, what we have gained by the war is, in one word, ALL that we should have lost without it: it is, the preservation of our Constitution, our Independence, our Honour, our Existence as a Nation.

In the same manner I might answer the question with respect to Ireland, I might enumerate the general advantages which Ireland would derive from the effects of the Arrangement to which I have already referred, the Protection which she will secure to herself in the hour of danger. The most effectual means of increasing her Commerce and improving her Agriculture, the command of English Capital, the infusion of English Manners and English Industry, necessarily tending to ameliorate her Condition, to accelerate the progress of internal civilization, and to terminate those feuds and dissensions which now distract the Country, and which she does not possess, within herself, the power either to controul or to extinguish. She would see the avenue to Honours, to distinctions,

and exalted Situations in the general feat of Empire, opened to all those whose abilities and talents enable them to indulge an honourable and laudable ambition.

But, independent of all these advantages, I might also answer, that the question is not what Ireland is to gain, but what she is to preserve : not merely how she may best improve her situation, but how she is to avert a pressing and immediate danger. In this view, what she gains is the preservation of all those blessings arising from the British Constitution, and which are inseparable from her Connexion with Great Britain. Those Blessings of which it has long been the aim of France, in conjunction with domestic traitors, to deprive her, and on their ruins to establish (with all its attendant miseries and horrors) a Jacobin Republic, founded on French Influence, and existing only in subserviency to France.

Such, Sir, would be the answer, if we direct our attention only to the question of general advantage. And here I should be inclined to stop ; but since it has also been more particularly asked,
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what are the advantages which she is to gain, in point of Commerce and Manufactures, I am desirous of applying my answer more immediately and distinctly to that part of the subject : and, as I know that the statement will carry more conviction with it, to those who make the inquiry, if given in the words of the Right Honourable Gentleman, to whom, and to whose opinions, I have had more than one occasion to advert in the course of this night, I will read you an extract from his recorded sentiments on the subject, in the year 1785, on this same memorable occasion of the Commercial Propositions. Speaking of a solid and unalterable Compact between the two Countries, speaking expressly of the peculiar importance of insuring the continuance of those Commercial benefits, which she at that time held only at the discretion of this country, he says—
 “ The exportation of Irish Products to England,
 “ amounts to Two Millions and a Half annually ;
 “ and the exportation of British Products, to Ireland,
 “ amounts to but One Million.”

He then proceeds to reason upon the advantage which Ireland would derive, under such circumstances.

cumstances, from guarding against mutual prohibitions; and he accompanies the statement, which I have just read, with this observation—

“ If, indeed, the Adjustment were to take
 “ away the Benefit from Ireland it would be a
 “ good cause for rejecting it; but, as it for ever
 “ confirms all the Advantages we derived from
 “ our Linen Trade, and binds England from
 “ making any law that can be injurious to it,
 “ surely Gentlemen who regard that trade, and
 “ *whose fortunes and rents depend on its prosperity,*
 “ *will not entertain a moment's doubt about embra-*
 “ *cing the offer.*”

Such was the reasoning of the Irish CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER; which I consider to have been perfectly just. With reference to his late opinions, I do not think I can more forcibly reply, to a person who signs his name to Propositions which declare that the ruin of the Linen Trade of Ireland is likely to be the consequence of an Union, than by opposing to him his own opinion. I shall be able to strengthen the former opinion of that Gentleman, by stating, that the progress
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that has been made in commercial advantages to Ireland, since 1785, has been such as to render his argument still more applicable. What is the nature of that Commerce, explained by the same person, in so concise and forcible a manner, that I am happy to use his own statement? He does not confine himself to the gross amount, but gives the articles in detail :—

“ Britain,” he says, “ imports annually from
 “ us Two Million Five Hundred Thousand
 “ Pounds of our Products, all, or very nearly all,
 “ duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on
 “ them. We import about a Million of her’s,
 “ and raise a Revenue on almost every article of
 “ it, and reserve the power of continuing that
 “ Revenue. She exports to us Salt for our
 “ Fisheries and Provisions; Hops, which we
 “ cannot grow; Coals which we cannot raise;
 “ Tin, which we have not; and Bark, which we
 “ cannot get elsewhere : and all these without re-
 “ serving any duty.”

I will not tire the patience of the House, by reading farther extracts; but the Right Honour-
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able Gentleman's whole Speech, in like manner, points out the advantages of the Commercial Propositions (at that time under consideration) as a ground-work of a Compact between the two Countries, in 1785, on Commercial subjects.— But how stands the case now? The trade is at this time infinitely more advantageous to Ireland. It will be proved, from the documents which I hold in my hand, as far as relates to the mere interchange of manufactures, that the manufactures, exported to Ireland from Great Britain, in 1797, very little exceeded a Million sterling (the articles of produce amount to nearly the same sum) while Great Britain, on the other hand, imported from Ireland to the amount of near Three Millions in the manufactured articles of Linen and Linen Yarn, and between Two and Three Millions in Provisions and Cattle, besides Corn and other articles of produce.

In addition to these Articles, there are other circumstances of advantage to Ireland. Articles which are essential to her trade and to her subsistence, or serve as raw materials for her manufactures, are sent from hence free of duty. It is expressly

prefsly stated on the same authority, that all that we take back from Ireland was liable to a Duty in that country on their exports ; so that in some instances we gave them a preference over ourselves.

The increasing produce of the chief article of their manufacture, and four-fifths of her whole export trade, are to be ascribed, not to that *Independent Legislature*, but to the liberality of the British Parliament. It is by the free admission of Linens for our market, and the Bounties granted by the British Parliament on its re-export, that the Linen-Trade has been brought to the height at which we now see it. To the Parliament of this Country, then, it is now owing, that a Market has been opened for her Linen to the amount of three millions. By the Bounty we give to Ireland, we afford her a double market for that article, and (what is still more striking and important) we have prevented a competition against her, arising from the superior cheapness of the Linen-Manufactures of the Continent, by subjecting their importation to a Duty of thirty per cent. Nothing would more clearly shew what would be the danger

to Ireland from the Competition in all its principal branches of the Linen-Trade, than the simple fact, that we even now import foreign Linens, under this heavy duty, to an amount equal to a seventh part of all that Ireland is able to send us, with the preference that has been stated. By this arrangement alone, we must therefore be considered, either as foregoing between seven and eight hundred thousand pounds per annum in revenue, which we should collect if we chose to levy the same duty on all Linens, Irish as well as Foreign, or on the other hand, as sacrificing perhaps at least a million sterling in the price paid for those articles, by the subjects of this Country, which might be saved, if we allowed the importation of all Linen, Foreign as well as Irish, equally free from Duty.

The present measure is, however, in its effects calculated not merely for a confirmation of the advantages on which the person to whom I have alluded has insisted. It is obvious that a fuller and more perfect connexion of the two countries, from whatever cause it may arise, must produce a greater facility and freedom of commercial intercourse,

tercourse, and ultimately tend to the advantage of both. The benefits to be derived to either country from such an arrangement must indeed, in a great measure, be gradual; but they are not on that account the less certain, and they cannot be stated in more forcible language than in that used in the speech to which I have referred.—

“ Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British Duties on our Manufactures. I agree with them it may not operate soon, but we are to look forward to a final settlement, and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the Kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make that fabrick which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by Bounties, Jealousies, or Legislative Interference, from its natural and beneficial course. This system will attain its real object,

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“ consolidating the strength of the remaining
 “ parts of the Empire, by encouraging the com-
 “ munications of their market among themselves
 “ with preference to every part against all
 “ strangers !”

I am at least, therefore, secure from the design of appearing to deliver any partial or chimerical opinion of my own, when I thus state, on the authority of a person the best informed, and who then judged dispassionately, both the infinite importance to Ireland of securing permanently the great commercial advantages which she now holds at the discretion of Great Britain, and the additional benefit which she would derive from any settlement which opened to her gradually a still more free and compleat commercial intercourse with this country. And while I state thus strongly the commercial advantages to the sister kingdom, I have no alarm lest I should excite any sentiment of jealousy here. I know that the inhabitants of Great Britain wish well to the prosperity of Ireland ;—that, if the Kingdoms are really and solidly united, they feel that to increase the commercial wealth of one Country is not to diminish that

that of the other, but to increase the strength and power of both. But to justify that sentiment, we must be satisfied that the wealth we are pouring into the lap of Ireland is not every day liable to be snatched from us, and thrown into the scale of the enemy. If therefore Ireland is to continue, as I trust it will for ever, an essential part of the integral strength of the British Empire; if her strength is to be permanently ours, and our strength to be hers, neither I, nor any English minister, can ever be deterred by the fear of creating jealousy in the hearts of English men, from stating the advantages of a closer Connexion, or from giving any assistance to the Commercial Prosperity of that Kingdom.

If ever indeed I should have the misfortune to witness the melancholy moment when such principles must be abandoned, when all hope of seeing Ireland permanently and securely connected with this country shall be at an end, I shall at least have the consolation of knowing, that it will not be the want of temper or forbearance, of conciliation, of kindness, or of full explanation on our part, which

which will have produced an event so fatal to Ireland, and so dangerous to Great Britain. If ever the over-bearing power of prejudice and passion shall produce that fatal consequence, it will too late be perceived and acknowledged, that all the great commercial advantages which Ireland at present enjoys, and which are continually increasing, are to be ascribed to the liberal conduct, the fostering care, of the British Empire, extended to the sister kingdom as to a part of ourselves, and not (as has been fallaciously and vainly pretended) to any thing which has been done or can be done by the independent power of her own separate Legislature.

I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to state to you the reasons, why I think this measure adviseable; why I wish it to be proposed to the Parliament of Ireland, with temper and fairness; and why it appears to me, entitled at least to a calm and dispassionate discussion in that Kingdom. I am aware, however, that objections have been urged against the measure, some of which are undoubtedly plausible, and have been but too successful

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in their influence on the Irish Parliament. Of these objections I shall now proceed, as concisely as possible, to take some notice.

The first is, what I heard alluded to by the Honourable Gentleman opposite to me, when his Majesty's Message was brought down; namely That the Parliament of Ireland is incompetent to entertain and discuss the question, or rather, to act upon the measure proposed, without having previously obtained the consent of the people of Ireland, their Constituents. But, Sir, I am led to suppose from what the Honourable Gentleman afterwards stated, that he made this objection, rather by way of deprecating the discussion of the question, than as entertaining the smallest doubt upon it himself. —If, however, the Honourable Gentleman, or any other Gentleman on the other side of the House, should seriously entertain a doubt on the subject, I shall be ready to discuss it with him distinctly, either this night or at any future opportunity. For the present I will assume, that no man can deny the competency of the Parliament of Ireland (representing as it does, in the
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language of our Constitution, “ *lawfully, fully, and freely, all the estates of the people of the realm*”) to make Laws to bind that people, unless he is disposed to distinguish that Parliament from the Parliament of Great Britain; and, while he maintains the independence of the Irish Legislature, yet denies to it the lawful and essential powers of Parliament. No man who maintains the Parliament of Ireland to be co-equal with our own, can deny its competency on this question, unless he means to go the length of denying, at the same moment, the whole of the authority of the Parliament of Great Britain—to shake every principle of legislation—and to maintain, that all the acts passed, and every thing done by Parliament, or sanctioned by its authority, however sacred, however beneficial, is neither more nor less than an act of usurpation. He must not only deny the validity of the union between Scotland and England, but he must deny the authority of every one of the proceedings of the limited Legislature since the Union; nay, Sir, he must go still farther, and deny the authority under which we now sit and deliberate here, as a House of Parliament. Of course, he must deny the validity of the adjustment of 1782, and call
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in question every measure which he has himself been the most forward to have enforced. This point, Sir, is of so much importance, that I think I ought not to suffer the opportunity to pass, without illustrating more fully what I mean. If this principle of the incompetency of Parliament to the decision of the Measure be admitted, or if it be contended, that Parliament has no legitimate authority to discuss and decide upon it, you will be driven to the necessity of recognizing a principle, the most dangerous that ever was adopted in any civilized State. I mean the principle, that Parliament cannot adopt any measure new in its nature, and of great importance, without appealing to the constituent and delegating authority for directions. If that doctrine be true, look to what an extent it will carry you. If such an argument could be set up and maintained, you acted without any legitimate authority when you created the representation of the Principality of Wales, or of either of the Counties Palatine of England. Every Law that Parliament ever made, without that appeal, either as to its own Frame and Constitution, as to the qualification of the electors or the elected, as to

the great and fundamental point of the succession to the Crown, was made without due authority.

If we turn to Ireland itself, what do Gentlemen think of the power of that Parliament, which, without any fresh delegation from its Protestant constituents, associates to itself all the Catholic electors, and thus destroys a fundamental distinction on which it was formed? God forbid, that I should object to or blame any of these Measures! I am only stating the extent to which the principle (that Parliament has no authority to decide upon the present Measure) will lead; and, if it be admitted in one case, it must be admitted in all. Will any man say, that (although a Protestant Parliament in Ireland, chosen exclusively by Protestant Constituents, has by its own inherent power, and without consulting those constituents, admitted and comprehended the Catholics who were till then, in fact, a separate community) that Parliament cannot associate itself with another Protestant community, represented by a Protestant Parliament, having one interest with itself, and similar in its Laws, its Constitution, and its

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Established Religion? What must be said by those who have at any time been friends to any plan of Parliamentary Reform, and particularly such as have been most recently brought forward, either in Great Britain or Ireland? Whatever may have been thought of the propriety of the Measure, I never heard any doubt of the competency of Parliament to consider and discuss it. Yet I defy any man to maintain the principle of those plans, without contending that, as a Member of Parliament, he possesses a right to concur in disfranchising those who sent him to Parliament, and to select others, by whom he was not elected, in their stead. I am sure that no sufficient distinction, in point of principle, can be successfully maintained for a single moment; nor should I deem it necessary to dwell on this point, in the manner I do, were I not convinced that it is connected in part with all those false and dangerous notions on the subject of Government which have lately become too prevalent in the world. It may, in fact, be traced to that gross perversion of the principles of all political society, which rests on the supposition that there exists continually in every Go-

vernment a Sovereignty *in abeyance* (as it were) on the part of the People, ready to be called forth on every occasion, or rather, on every pretence, when it may suit the purposes of the party or faction who are the advocates of this doctrine to suppose an occasion for its exertion. It is in these false principles that are contained the seeds of all the misery, desolation, and ruin, which in the present day have spread themselves over so large a proportion of the habitable Globe.

These principles, Sir, are, at length, so well known and understood in their practical effects, that they can no longer hope for one enlightened or intelligent advocate, when they appear in their true colours. Yet, with all the horror we all feel, in common with the rest of the World, at the effect of them, with all the confirmed and increasing love and veneration which we feel towards the Constitution of our Country, founded as it is, both in Theory and Experience, on principles directly the reverse; yet, there are too many among us, who, while they abhor and reject such opinions, when presented to them in their naked deformity, suffer them in a more disguised shape

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to be gradually infused into their minds, and insensibly to influence and bias their sentiments and arguments on the greatest and most important discussions. This concealed poison is now more to be dreaded than any open attempt to support such principles by argument or to enforce them by arms. No society, whatever be its particular form, can long subsist, if this principle is once admitted. In every Government, there must reside somewhere a supreme, absolute, and unlimited authority. This is equally true of every lawful Monarchy—of every Aristocracy—of every pure Democracy (if indeed such a form of Government ever has existed, or ever can exist)—and of those mixed Constitutions formed and compounded from the others, which we are justly inclined to prefer to any of them. In all these Governments, indeed alike, that power may by possibility be abused, but whether the abuse is such as to justify and call for the interference of the people collectively, or, more properly speaking, of any portion of it, must always be an extreme case and a question of the greatest and most perilous responsibility, not in Law only, but in Conscience and in Duty, to all those who either act upon it themselves,

themselves, or persuade others to do so. But no provision for such a case ever has been or can be made before-hand; it forms no chapter in any known code of laws, it can find no place in any system of human jurisprudence. But, above all, if such a principle can make no part of any established Constitution, not even of those where the Government is so framed as to be most liable to the abuse of its powers, it will be preposterous indeed to suppose that it can be admitted in one where those powers are so distributed and balanced as to furnish the best security against the probability of such an abuse. Shall that principle be sanctioned as a necessary part of the best Government, which cannot be admitted to exist even as a check upon the worst! Pregnant as it is with danger and confusion, shall it be received and established in proportion as every reason which can ever make it necessary to recur to it is not likely to exist? Yet, Sir, I know not how it is, that, in proportion as we are less likely to have occasion for so desperate a remedy, in proportion as a Government is so framed as to provide within itself the best guard and control on the exercise of every branch of authority, to furnish the means
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of preventing or correcting every abuse of power, and to secure, by its own natural operation, a due attention to the interest and feelings of every part of the community, in that very proportion persons have been found perverse enough to imagine, that such a Constitution admits and recognizes, as a part of it, that which is inconsistent with the nature of any Government, and above all, inapplicable to our own.

I have said more, Sir, upon this subject than I should have thought necessary, if I had not felt that this false and dangerous mockery of the *Sovereignty of the People* is in truth one of the chief elements of Jacobinism, one of the favourite impostures to mislead the understanding, and to flatter and inflame the passions of the mass of mankind, who have not the opportunity of examining and exposing it, and that as such on every occasion, and in every shape in which it appears, it ought to be combated and resisted by every friend to civil order, and to the peace and happiness of mankind.

Sir, the next and not the least prevalent objection, is one which is contained in words which are an appeal to a natural and laudable, but what

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I must call an erroneous and mistaken sense of national pride. It is an appeal to the generous and noble passions of a nation easily inflamed under any supposed attack upon its honour, I mean the attempt to represent the question of a Union by compact between the Parliaments of the two Kingdoms as a question involving the Independance of Ireland.—It has been said, that no compensation could be made to any country for the surrender of its National Independance. Sir, on this, as well as on every part of the question, I am desirous Gentlemen should come closely to the point, that they should sift it to the bottom, and ascertain upon what grounds and principles their opinion really rests. Do they mean to maintain that in any humiliating, in any degrading sense of the word which can be acted upon practically as a rule, and which can lead to any useful conclusion, that at any time when the Government of any two separate Countries unite in forming one more extensive empire, that the individuals who compose either of the former narrow societies are afterwards less members of an independant country, or to any valuable and useful purpose less possessed of political freedom or civil

civil happiness than they were before. It must be obvious to every Gentleman who will look at the subject, in tracing the history of all the countries, the most proud of their present existing independance, of all the nations in Europe, there is not one that could exist in the state in which it now stands, if that principle had been acted upon by our forefathers; and Europe must have remained to this hour in a state of ignorance and barbarism, from the perpetual warfare of independent and petty states. In the instance of our own Country, it would be a superfluous waste of time to enumerate the steps by which all its parts were formed into one Kingdom; but will any man in general assert, that in all the different Unions which have formed the principal states of Europe, their inhabitants have become less free, that they have had less of which to be proud, less scope for their own exertions, than they had in their former situation. If this doctrine is to be generally maintained, what becomes of the situation at this hour of any one county of England, or of any one county of Ireland, now united under the independant Parliament of that Kingdom? If it be pushed to its full extent, it is obviously incompatible with all civil society. As

the former principle of the sovereignty of the people strikes at the foundation of all governments, so this is equally hostile to all political confederacy, and mankind must be driven back to what is called the state of nature.

But while I combat this general and abstract principle, which would operate as an objection to every union between separate states, on the ground of the sacrifice of independance, do I mean to contend that there is in no case just ground for such a statement? Far from it: it may become, on many occasions, the first duty of a free and generous people. If there exists a country which contains within itself the means of military protection, the naval force necessary for its defence, which furnishes objects of industry sufficient for the subsistence of its inhabitants, and pecuniary resources adequate to maintaining, with dignity, the rank which it has attained among the nations of the world; if, above all, it enjoys the blessings of internal content and tranquillity, and possesses a distinct constitution of its own, the defects of which, if any, it is within itself capable of correcting, and if that constitution be equal, if not superior, to that of any other in the world, or (which is nearly the same thing)

thing) if those who live under it believe it to be so, and fondly cherish that opinion, I can indeed well understand that such a country must be jealous of any measure, which, even by its own consent, under the authority of its own lawful government, is to associate it as a part of a larger and more extensive empire.

But, Sir, if, on the other hand, it should happen that there be a country which, against the greatest of all dangers that threaten its peace and security, has not adequate means of protecting itself without the aid of another nation ; if that other be a neighbouring and kindred nation, speaking the same language, whose laws, whose customs, and habits are the same in principle, but carried to a greater degree of perfection, with a more extensive commerce, and more abundant means of acquiring and diffusing national wealth ; the stability of whose government—the excellence of whose constitution—is more than ever the admiration and envy of Europe, and of which the very Country of which we are speaking can only boast an inadequate and imperfect resemblance ;—under such circumstances, I would ask, what conduct would be prescribed by every

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rational

rational principle of dignity, of honour, or of interest? I would ask, whether this is not a faithful description of the circumstances which ought to dispose Ireland to a Union? Whether Great Britain is not precisely the nation with which, on these principles, a Country, situated as Ireland is, would desire to unite? Does a Union, under such circumstances, by free consent, and on just and equal terms, deserve to be branded as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke?—Is it not rather the free and voluntary association of two great Countries, which join, for their common benefit, in one Empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which want nothing but that indissoluble Connection to render both invincible.

Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo
 Nec nova regna peto ; paribus se legibus ambæ
 Inviçtæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant.

Sir, I have nearly stated all that is necessary for me to trouble the House with ; there are, however, one or two other objections which I wish not entirely to pass over : One of them is, a
 general

general notion that a Union with Great Britain must necessarily increase one of the great evils of Ireland, by producing depopulation in many parts of the Country, and by increasing greatly the number of absentees. I do not mean to deny that this effect would, to a limited extent, take place during a part of the year ; but I think it will not be difficult for me to prove, that this circumstance will be more than counterbalanced by the operation of the system in other respects.

If it be true that this measure has an inevitable tendency to admit the introduction of that British Capital which is most likely to give life to all the operations of Commerce, and to all the improvements of Agriculture ; if it be that which above all other considerations is most likely to give security, quiet, and internal repose to Ireland ; if it is likely to remove the chief bar to the internal advancement of wealth and of civilization, by a more intimate intercourse with England ; if it is more likely to communicate from hence those habits which distinguish this Country, and which, by a continued gradation, unite the highest and the lowest orders of the community without a chasm in any part of the system ; if it

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is not only likely to invite (as I have already said) English Capital to set Commerce in motion, but to offer it the use of new markets, to open fresh resources of wealth and industry; can wealth, can industry, can civilization increase among the whole bulk of the people without its much more than counterbalancing the partial effect of the removal of the few individuals who, for a small part of the year, would follow the seat of Legislation? Will it be supposed that the mere absence of Parliament from Dublin, if it would still remain the centre of Education and of the internal commerce of a country increasing in improvement; if it would still remain the seat of legal discussion, which must always increase with an increase of property and occupation, what ground is there to suppose, with a view even to the interests of those whose partial interests have been most successfully appealed to; what reason is there to suppose that, with a view either to the respectable Body of the Bar, to the Merchant, or Shopkeeper of Dublin (if it were possible to suppose that a transaction of this sort ought to be referred to that single criterion) that they would not find their proportionate share of advantage in the general advantage

advantage of the State? Let it be remembered, also, that if the transfer of the Seat of Legislature may call from Ireland to England the Members of the United Parliament, yet, after the Union, property, influence and consideration in Ireland will lead, as much as in Great Britain, to all the objects of imperial ambition; and there must, consequently, exist a new incitement to persons to acquire property in that Country, and to those who possess it, to reside there and to cultivate the good opinion of those with whom they live, and to extend and improve their influence and connections.

But, Sir, I need not dwell longer on argument, however it may satisfy my own mind, because we can on this question refer to experience. I see every Gentleman anticipates that I allude to Scotland. What has been the result of the Union there? A Union, give me leave to say, as much opposed, and by much the same arguments, prejudices, and misconceptions, as are urged, at this moment, creating too the same alarms, and provoking the same outrages, as have lately taken place in Dublin. Look at the
metropolis

metropolis of Scotland : the population of Edinburgh has been more than doubled since the Union, and a new city added to the old. But we may be told, that Edinburgh has engrossed all the commerce of that country, and has those advantages which Dublin cannot expect. Yet while Edinburgh, deprived of its Parliament, but retaining, as Dublin would retain, its Courts of Justice ; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the resort of those whose circumstances would not permit them to visit a distant metropolis ; continuing, as Dublin would continue, the seat of national education, while Edinburgh has baffled all the predictions of that period, what has been the situation of Glasgow ? The population of Glasgow, since the Union, has increased in the proportion of between five and six to one : look at its progress in manufactures ; look at its general advantages, and tell me what ground there is, judging by experience in aid of theory, for those gloomy apprehensions which have been so industriously excited.

There remains, Sir, another general line of argument, which I have already anticipated, and I hope answered, that the commercial privileges
now

now enjoyed by Ireland, and to which it owes so much of its prosperity, would be less secure than at present. I have given an answer to that already, by stating that they are falsely imputed to the independence of the Irish Parliament, for that they are in fact owing to the exercise of the voluntary discretion of the British Parliament, unbound by compact, prompted only by its natural disposition to consider the interests of Ireland the same as its own; and if that has been done while Ireland is only united to us in the imperfect and precarious manner in which it is, while it has a separate Parliament, notwithstanding the commercial jealousies of our own manufactures; if under these circumstances we have done so, if we have done so with no other connection than that which now subsists, and while Ireland has no share in our representation; what fresh ground can there be for apprehension, when she will have her proportionate weight in the Legislature, and will be united with us as closely as Lancashire or Yorkshire, or any other county in Great Britain.

Sir, I have seen it under the same authority to which I am sorry so often to advert, that the

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Linen Trade would be injured, and that there will be no security for its retaining its present advantages. I have already stated to you (and with that very authority in my favour) that those advantages are at present precarious, and that their security can only arise from Compact with Great Britain. Such a Compact, this Measure would establish in the most solemn manner; but besides this, Sir, the natural policy of this Country, not merely its experienced liberality, but the identity of Interests after a Union, would offer a security worth a thousand Compacts.

Sir, the only other general topic of objection is (that upon which great pains have been taken to raise an alarm in Ireland) the idea that the main principle of the Measure was to subject Ireland to a load of Debt and an increase of Taxes, and to expose her to the consequences of all our alledged difficulties and supposed necessities.

Sir, I hope the zeal, the spirit, and the liberal and enlarged policy, of this Country, has given ample proof that it is not from a pecuniary motive that we seek an Union. If it is not
desirable

desirable on the grounds I have stated, it cannot be recommended for the mere purpose of Taxation ; but to quiet any jealousy on this subject, here again let us look to Scotland: is there any instance where, with 45 Members on her part and 513 on ours, that that part of the United Kingdom has paid more than its proportion to the general burthens?—Is it then, Sir, any ground of apprehension, that we are likely to tax Ireland more heavily when she becomes associated with ourselves?—To tax in its due proportion the whole of the Empire, to the utter exclusion of the idea of the predominance of one part of society over another, is the great characteristic of British Finance, as Equality of Laws is of the British Constitution.

But, Sir, in addition to this, if we come to the details of this proposition, it is in our power to fix, for any number of years which shall be thought fit, the proportion by which the Contribution of Ireland, to the expences of the State, shall be regulated; that these proportions shall not be such as would make a contribution greater than the necessary amount of its own present necessary

expences as a separate Kingdom ; and, even after that limited period, the proportion of the whole contribution, from time to time, might be made to depend on the comparative produce, in each Kingdom, of such general taxes as might be thought to afford the best criterion of their respective wealth. Or, what I should hope would be found practicable, the system of internal taxation in each county might gradually be so equalized and assimilated, on the leading articles, as to make all rules of specific proportion unnecessary, and to secure, that Ireland shall never be taxed but in proportion as we tax ourselves.

The application of these principles, however, will form matter of future discussion ; I mention them only as strongly shewing, from the misrepresentation which has taken place on this part of the subject, how incumbent it is upon the House to receive these propositions, and to adopt, after due deliberation, such resolutions as may record to Ireland the terms upon which we are ready to meet her. And, in the mean time, let us wait, not without impatience, but without dissatisfaction, for that moment, when the effect of reason and
discussion

discussion may reconcile the minds of men, in that Kingdom, to a Measure which I am sure will be found as necessary for their peace and happiness, as it will be conducive to the general security and advantage of the British Empire.

Sir, it remains to be my duty to lay these Resolutions before the House, wishing that the more detailed discussion of them may be reserved to a future day.

RESOLUTIONS.

FIRST,

That in order to promote and secure the essential Interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the Strength, Power, and Resources of the British Empire, it will be adviseable to concur in such measures as may best tend to unite the two Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into one Kingdom, in such manner, and on such Terms and Conditions as may be established by Acts of the respective Parliaments of His Majesty's said Kingdoms.

SECOND.

That it appears to this Committee that it would be fit to propose as the first Article to serve as a Basis of the said Union, that the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon a day to be agreed upon, be united into one Kingdom, by the name of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

THIRD.

THIRD.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that the Succession to the Monarchy and the Imperial Crown of the said United Kingdoms, shall continue limited and settled, in the same manner as the Imperial Crown of the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing Laws, and to the Terms of the Union between England and Scotland.

FOURTH.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that the said United Kingdom be represented in one and the same Parliament, to be stiled the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and that such a number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and such a number of Members of the House of Commons as shall be hereafter agreed upon by Acts of the respective Parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said Parliament on the part of Ireland, and shall be summoned, chosen and returned, in such manner as shall be fixed by an Act of the Parliament of Ireland previous to the said Union; and that every Member hereafter to sit and vote in the said Parliament of the United Kingdom shall, until the said Parliament shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same Oaths, and make the same Declarations as are by Law required to be taken, subscribed and made by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

FIFTH.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that the Churches of England and Ireland, and the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government thereof, shall be preserved as now by Law Established.

SIXTH,

SIXTH.

That for the same purpose it appears also to this Committee, that it would be fit to propose that His Majesty's Subjects in Ireland shall at all times hereafter be entitled to the same privileges, and be on the same footing in respect of Trade and Navigation, in all Ports and Places belonging to Great Britain, and in all cases with respect to which Treaties shall be made by His Majesty, his Heirs or Successors, with any Foreign Power, as His Majesty's Subjects in Great Britain; that no Duty shall be imposed on the Import or Export between Great Britain and Ireland of any Articles now Duty free: and that on other Articles there shall be established, for a time to be limited, such a moderate rate of equal Duties as shall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective Parliaments, subject, after the expiration of such limited time, to be diminished equally with respect to both Kingdoms, but in no case to be increased; that all Articles which may at any time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from Foreign Parts, shall be importable through either Kingdom into the other, subject to the like Duties and Regulations as if the same were imported directly from Foreign Parts; that where any Articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of either Kingdom, are subject to any internal Duty in one Kingdom, such countervailing Duties (over and above any Duties on import to be fixed as aforesaid) shall be imposed as shall be necessary to prevent any inequality in that respect: and that all other matters of Trade and Commerce other than the foregoing, and than such others as may before the Union be specially agreed upon for the due encouragement of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the respective Kingdoms, shall remain to be regulated from time to time by the United Parliament.

SEVENTH.

That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that the charge arising from the payment of the Interest or Sinking Fund for the reduction of the Principal of the Debt incurred in either Kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively. That for a number of Years to be limited, the future ordinary expences of the UNITED KINGDOM, in Peace or War, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such proportions as shall be established by the respective Parliaments previous to the Union; and that after the expiration of the time to be so limited, the proportion shall not be liable to be varied, except according to such rates and principles as shall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

EIGHTH.

That for the like purpose it would be fit to propose, that all Laws in force at the time of the Union, and that all the Courts of Civil or Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction within the respective Kingdoms, shall remain as now by Law established within the same, subject only to such alterations or regulations from time to time as circumstances may appear to the Parliament of the UNITED KINGDOM to require.

That the foregoing RESOLUTIONS be laid before His Majesty with an humble ADDRESS, assuring His Majesty that we have proceeded with the utmost attention to the consideration of the important objects recommended to us in His Majesty's Gracious MESSAGE.

That we entertain a firm persuasion that a COMPLETE AND INTIRE UNION between Great Britain and Ireland, founded on equal and liberal principles, on the similarity
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of Laws, Constitution and Government, and on a sense of mutual Interests and Affections, by promoting the Security, Wealth and Commerce of the respective Kingdoms, and by allaying the distractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must afford fresh means of opposing at all times an effectual resistance to the destructive Projects of our Foreign and Domestic Enemies, and must tend to confirm and augment the Stability, Power, and Resources of the Empire.

Impressed with these considerations, we feel it our duty humbly to lay before his Majesty such Propositions as appear to us best calculated to form the basis of such a settlement, leaving it to His Majesty's wisdom, at such time and in such manner as His Majesty, in his Parental Solitude for the happiness of his People, shall judge fit, to communicate these Propositions to His Parliament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times ready to concur in all such Measures as may be found most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and salutary Work. And we trust that, after full and mature consideration, such a Settlement may be framed and established, by the deliberative Consent of the Parliaments of both Kingdoms, as may be conformable to the Sentiments, Wishes, and real Interests of His Majesty's faithful Subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blessings of our free and invaluable Constitution, in the support of the Honour and Dignity of His Majesty's Crown, and in the preservation and advancement of the Welfare and Prosperity of the whole British Empire,

APPENDIX.

The following Message was presented in the House of Commons by Mr. Fox, Secretary of State, on the 9th of April, 1782.

GEORGE R.

HIS Majesty being concerned to find that discontent and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal Subjects in Ireland, upon matters of great weight and importance, earnestly recommends to this House, to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a Final Adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to both Kingdoms.

G. R.

1st May

1st May, 1782.

Mr. Secretary Fox presented to the House, by His Majesty's command,

Copy of the Message to the House of Lords and Commons in Ireland, from His Grace the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, delivered the 16th April, 1782 : And also,

Copy of a Resolution of the House of Lords in Ireland, Mercurii, 17^o die Aprilis, 1782 : And also,

Copy of a Resolution of the House of Commons in Ireland, Martis, 16^o die Aprilis, 1782.

And the Titles of the said Copies were read.

The said Copies are as followeth ; viz.

Copy of the Message to the Houses of Lords and Commons in Ireland, from His Grace the Lord Lieutenant, delivered the 16th April, 1782.

PORTLAND,

I have it in command from His Majesty, to inform this House, that His Majesty being con-

concerned to find that discontents and jealousies are prevailing among his loyal Subjects of this Country, upon matters of great weight and importance, His Majesty recommends to this House to take the same into their most serious consideration, in order to such a Final Adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to his Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland.

P.

*Copy of a Resolution of the House of Lords in
Ireland, Mercurii, 17^o die Aprilis, 1782.*

RESOLVED, By the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled *Nemine dissentiente*, That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to return him our thanks for the most gracious Message sent to this House by his Majesty's command, through the medium of His Grace the Lord Lieutenant, and to assure him of our most unshaken loyalty and attachment to His Majesty's person and government, and of the lively sense we entertain of his paternal care of his people of Ireland, in thus enquiring into the
discontents

discontents and jealousies that subsist amongst them, in order to such Final Adjustment as may give mutual satisfaction to his kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland.

That, thus encouraged by his Royal Interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before His Majesty the cause of such discontents and jealousies.

To represent to His Majesty, That His Subjects of Ireland are entitled to a free constitution ; that the Imperial Crown of Ireland is inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great-Britain, on which Connection the happiness of both nations essentially depends ; but that the Kingdom of Ireland is a distinct dominion, having a Parliament of her own, the sole Legislature thereof.

That there is no power whatsoever competent to make laws to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons, of Ireland ; upon which exclusive Right of Legislation we consider the very essence of our liberties to depend, a Right which we claim as the Birth-right of the People of Ireland,

land, and which we are determined, in every situation of life, to assert and maintain.

To represent to His Majesty, That we have seen with concern certain claims, both of legislature and judicature, asserted by the Parliament of Great Britain, in an Act passed in Great Britain in the sixth year of George the First, intituled
 “ An Act for the better securing the Depen-
 “ dency of Ireland upon the Crown of Great
 “ Britain :”

That we conceive the said Act, and the powers thereby claimed, to be the great and principal causes of the discontents and jealousies that subsist in this Kingdom :

To assure His Majesty, That this House considers it as a matter of constitutional right and protection, that all Bills which become Law should receive the approbation of His Majesty, under the Seal of Great Britain ; but we consider the practice of suppressing our Bills in the Council of Ireland, or altering them any where, to be a matter which calls for redress :

To

To represent to His Majesty, That an Act intituled “ An Act for the better Accommodation
“ of His Majesty’s Forces ;” being unlimited in duration, but which, from the particular circumstances of the times, passed into a law, has been the cause of much jealousy and discontent in this Kingdom :

That we have thought it our duty to lay before His Majesty these, the principal causes of the discontents and jealousies subsisting in this Kingdom :

That we have the greatest reliance on His Majesty’s wisdom, the most sanguine expectations from his virtuous choice of a Chief Governor, and the greatest confidence in the wise and constitutional Council His Majesty has adopted :

That we have, moreover, a high sense and veneration for the British Character, and do therefore conceive, that the proceedings of this country, founded as they are in right, and supported by constitutional liberty, must have excited the approbation and esteem of the British nation :

That

That we are the more confirmed in this hope, inasmuch as the people of this Kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the freedom of Great Britain, without at the same time declaring their determination to share her fate, standing or falling with the British nation.

Wm. Watts Gayer	} Cler. Parliament.
Edw. Gayer	

*Copy of a Resolution of the House of Commons in
Ireland, Martis, 16^o die Aprilis, 1782.*

RESOLVED, That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, to return His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious message to this House, signified by his Grace the Lord Lieutenant. To assure His Majesty of our unshaken attachment to His Majesty's Person and Government, and of our lively sense of his Paternal Care, in thus taking the lead to administer content to His Majesty's subjects of Ireland; that thus encouraged by his royal interposition, we shall beg leave, with all duty and affection, to lay before His Majesty the causes of our discon-
tents

tents and jealousies : To assure His Majesty, that his subjects of Ireland are a free People ; that the Crown of Ireland is an Imperial Crown, inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great Britain, on which Connexion the interests and happiness of both Nations essentially depend ; but that the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct Kingdom, with a Parliament of her own, the sole Legislature thereof ; that there is no body of men competent to make Laws to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, nor any other Parliament which hath any authority or power of any sort whatsoever in this country, save only the Parliament of Ireland : To assure His Majesty, that we humbly conceive, that in this Right the very Essence of our Liberties exist ; a Right which we, on the part of all the People of Ireland, do claim as their birth-right, and which we cannot yield but with our lives : To assure His Majesty, that we have seen with concern certain Claims advanced by the Parliament of Great Britain, in an act, intituled, An Act for the “ better securing the Dependency of Ireland ; ” an act containing matter entirely irreconcilable to the fundamental Rights of this Nation ; that

we consider this act, and the claims it advances, to be the great and principle cause of the discontents and jealousies in this Kingdom: To assure His Majesty, that His Majesty's Commons of Ireland do most sincerely wish, that all Bills which become Law in Ireland should receive the approbation of His Majesty, under the Seal of Great Britain; but that yet we do consider the Practice of suppressing our Bills in the Council of Ireland, or altering the same any where, to be another just cause of discontent and jealousy: To assure His Majesty, that an Act, intituled, "An Act for the better Accommodation of His Majesty's Forces," being unlimited in duration, and defective in other instances (but passed in that shape from the particular circumstances of the times) is another just cause of discontent and jealousy in this Kingdom: That we have submitted these, the principal causes of the present discontent and jealousy in Ireland, and remain in humble expectation of redress; that we have the greatest reliance on His Majesty's wisdom, the most sanguine expectations from his virtuous choice of a Chief Governor, and great confidence in the wise, suspicious, and constitutional councils which

which we see with satisfaction His Majesty has adopted; that we have moreover a high sense and veneration for the British character, and do therefore conceive, that the proceedings of this country, founded as they are in right, and tempered by duty, must have excited the approbation and esteem, instead of wounded the pride, of the British Nation; and we beg leave to assure His Majesty, that we are the more confirmed in this hope, inasmuch as the people of this Kingdom have never expressed a desire to share the freedom of England, without declaring a determination to share her fate likewise, standing and falling with the British nation.

THO. ELLIS, *Cler. Par. Dom. Com.*

ORDERED, That the said Copies do lie upon the Table, to be perused by the Members of the House.

17th May, 1782.

RESOLVED, That this House will, immediately, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole

House, to take into consideration His Majesty's most gracious Message, of the 9th Day of April last, relative to the State of Ireland.

ORDERED, That the several papers which were presented to the House, by Mr. Secretary Fox, upon the 1st day of this instant May, be referred to the said Committee.

Then the House resolved itself into the said Committee.

Mr. Speaker left the Chair.

Mr. Powys took the Chair of the Committee.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Mr. Powys reported from the Committee, That they had come to several Resolutions; which they had directed him to report, when the House will please to receive the same.

ORDERED, That the Report be now received.

Mr.

Mr. Powys accordingly reported, from the said Committee, the Resolutions which the Committee had directed him to report to the House, which he read in his place, and afterwards delivered in at the Clerk's table; where the same were read; and are as follows : *viz.*

RESOLVED, That it is the Opinion of this Committee, That an Act, made in the sixth year of the reign of his late Majesty King George the First, intituled, " An Act for the better
" securing the Dependency of the Kingdom of
" Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain," ought to be repealed.

RESOLVED, that it is the Opinion of this Committee, That it is indispensable to the interests and happiness of both Kingdoms, that the Connexion between them should be established, by mutual consent, upon a solid and permanent Basis.

The said Resolutions, being severally read a second time, were, upon the Question severally put thereupon, agreed to by the House, *Nemini Contradicenti.*

ORDERED,

ORDERED, That leave be given to bring in a Bill for repealing an Act made in the sixth year of the reign of his late Majesty, King George the First, intituled “ An Act for the better securing “ the Dependency of the Kingdom of Ireland “ upon the Crown of Great Britain;” and that Mr. Secretary Fox, Mr. Thomas Pitt, Mr. Powys, and Lord John Cavendish, do prepare and bring in the same.

RESOLVED, That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, That His Majesty will be graciously pleased to take such measures as His Majesty in His Royal Wisdom shall think most conducive to the establishing, by mutual consent, the Connexion between this Kingdom and the Kingdom of Ireland upon a solid and permanent basis.

ORDERED, That the said Address be presented to His Majesty, by such Members of this House as are of His Majesty’s most honourable Privy Council.

22d *May*, 1782.

Mr. Secretary Fox reported to the House, That His Majesty had been attended with the Address of this House, of Friday last, which His Majesty had been pleased to receive very graciously ; and that His Majesty had commanded him to acquaint this House, that he will immediately take such measures as may be most likely to conduce to the establishment of a Connexion between this Kingdom and the Kingdom of Ireland upon a solid and permanent basis.

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND.

August 12, 1785.

——— *The Chancellor of the Exchequer* [Mr. FOSTER] seconded the motion,* and resumed. To such wretched shifts are gentlemen driven, who attempt to support what is not supportable, and would vainly endeavour to persuade you that this measure trenches on the independence of our Legislature; you need not adopt any laws that Great Britain may pass for the regulation of commerce; if you do not approve them, you may reject them whenever you think proper; you do but reject the benefit of the condition, and return to the situation in which you now are; but the same Member has proved most strongly the necessity of introducing the Bill, for when such abilities as his can totally mis-

* “ That leave be given to bring in a Bill, for effectuating the intercourse and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both Kingdoms.”

conceive its tendency, it ought to be introduced, in order to be fully understood. He has observed largely on each Proposition, and nothing was ever so mistated, misrepresented and misunderstood, as every part of them has been by him. It would be absurd to follow him through all his errors, many of them the most ignorant child would be ashamed to advance; but I will point out a few, not perhaps so obvious without examination.

Let me first take notice of his having alluded to me, and said, that I voted against a declaration of Rights. I deny it; I declared my opinion of the independence of our Legislature, from this very seat, early in the debate on that day; but did *he* vote for it? *He did not*, and I repeat the Hon. Gentleman did not vote for it, but lamented that the subject had been brought in that day.

—— I shall leave this subject as a lesson to the Hon. Gentleman, never for the future to charge facts that are unfounded. I shall now proceed to the Hon. Gentleman's observations.

He says “ mark the cunning with which the
 “ resolutions are drawn, to the injury of Ire-
 “ land ; there is no new prohibition to be allow-
 “ ed on the import from one country to ano-
 “ ther.” This is certainly a great evil, especi-
 ally if we consider that the Exportation of Irish
 products to England amounts to TWO MILLIONS
 and an HALF annually—and the Exportation of
 British products to Ireland amount but to ONE
 MILLION, so it is injurious to a country which
 may by prohibition lose two millions and an
 half, to stipulate against prohibitions, and the
 country that sends more than she takes, is not
 wise in guarding against mutual prohibition.

Another discovery the Hon. Gentleman has
 made is that countervailing duties are unfair—why?
 Because the Brewery of Ireland will thereby be
 effectually protected. The Hon. Gentleman com-
 plains of the Report of the English Privy Coun-
 cil, who say that to put Ireland and England on
 a footing of exact reciprocity as to linen, Ire-
 land ought to give a bounty on the Exportation
 of English Linens, because England gives a
 bounty

bounty on the exportation of Irish Linens. Can any thing be more just? Yet England makes no such demand, but is ready by this adjustment to give additional security to our Linen trade for ever. If indeed the adjustment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cause for rejecting it; but as it for ever confirms all the advantages we derive from our Linen trade, and binds England from making any law that can be injurious to it; surely Gentlemen who regard that trade, and whose fortunes and rent depend on its prosperity, will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.

Another of his curious objections is, that as we have not a navy of our own, and if we assist the navy of the empire, England will turn that navy to her own ambitious purposes. To what ambitious purposes? To the protection of that commerce, and of those colonies which are now to become ours.—In the moment that she gives up her monopoly of colonies, she is accused of ambitious purpose, for her separate aggrandizement.

The Hon. Gentleman complains, that the Bill now before the English Parliament makes it necessary that every proper and authentic document to prevent smuggling should be sent by the revenue officers of this country with any foreign or plantation goods sent from hence to England, but that the same precaution is not taken with regard to the same kind of goods sent from England to Ireland. This is the strongest argument for waiting the introduction of the Irish Bill; it speaks the consciousness of the English Parliament, that they could not prescribe to our revenue officers what documents should be satisfactory to them on receiving goods from England, but that the Irish Parliament alone in their own Bill, could determine that matter. It shews the Hon. Gentleman to be totally ignorant of what either is or ought to be the substance of the Bill.

The Hon. Gentleman talks of bounties, and says, by abolishing bounties, we shall no longer be able to bring corn to this city; our inland corn bounties, he says, are to be turned into Protecting Duties for England. A strange conception! But why has he fixed on corn and flour?

If

If he had read the Resolution on which he is arguing, he would have seen that corn and flour are every where exempted.

Another argument of the Hon. Gentleman is, that the declaring that neither country hereafter can lay any new prohibition on native productions, implies cunningly that it may on foreign. What an argument! when the very first principles of the system is, that a mutual interchange of foreign commodities is for ever to take place between the two kingdoms, and one even of the Twenty Propositions declares it in precise terms—But, the Hon. Gentleman talks of prohibitions on exports, &c. Would the Hon. Gentleman wish to leave it in the power of either nation to prohibit their native commodities from being exported to the other? would he wish to leave it in the power of England to prohibit the exportation of coals, salt, iron, bark, hops, and many other articles, or to raise a revenue on these articles when exported hither.

The Hon. Gentleman talks particularly of wool. I admit, if you balance wool against wool, that

his argument is right; but the just way is to balance the whole of the exports;—England engages never to prohibit the export of articles which are necessary almost to our existence, and we engage not to prohibit the export of articles which bring us in 500,000*l.* a year. We are to engage not to prohibit the export of Woollen and Linen Yarn, which we have exported for a whole century, and without keeping a market for the redundancy of which by export, we could *not* ensure plenty for own manufactures.

The Gentleman too totally mistakes the case of patents and copy-rights. British patents and copy-rights are protected in Britain by prohibition against import. The Resolutions say to us, “protect your’s in like manner;” a measure never yet adopted here, which must promote genius, printing, and invention in Ireland.

I am ashamed, Sir, of taking up so much of your time on a subject which might be so easily understood by the lowest capacity; I shall therefore quit the Hon. Gentleman and come to the question of constitution, which I do not at all think

think involved in this subject. If Great Britain grants us a full partnership in all her trade, in all her colonies, if she admits us to a full participation in the benefits of her Navigation laws, by which she has raised herself to the greatest commercial power in the world; if she does not call upon us to contribute to the expence of the partnership, but merely to receive our share of the profits, and says, we may continue in that partnership only so long as we chuse, can any man say, the conditions of it amount to a surrender of our legislature? surely not, it is idle speculation. Let us then look at the subject, free from all imaginary dread for the constitution.

Britain imports annually from us 2,500,000*l*. of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about a 1,000,000*l*. of hers, and raise a revenue on almost every article of it, and reserve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us salt for our fisheries and provisions; hops which we cannot grow; coals which we cannot raise; tin which we have not; and bark which we cannot get elsewhere; and all these without
reserving

reserving any duty ; or a power to impose any on them ; though her own subjects pay 2, 3, or 4s. a chaldron for her own coals, sent coastways, and in London 7s. We on the contrary charge a duty for our own use here on almost every article we send to her. So much for exports ; now as to bounties, she almost ruined our manufacture of sail-cloth, by bounties on export of her own to Ireland. In 1750, or thereabouts, when her bounty commenced, we exported more than we imported, and in 1784, we exported none, and imported 180,000 yards ; she now withdraws that bounty. And let me digress here a little on sail-cloth, which although gentlemen affect to despise when mentioned, will, I trust, be an immediate source of wealth by this adjustment. For 1. This bounty is to be removed. 2. The export of sail-cloth to the Indies is to be allowed, and Great Britain exported there, in 1782, about 200,000 ells. 3. There is a British law, obliging every British and colony ship to have its first suits of British sail-cloth. Irish now is to be deemed British. 4. There is a preference of 2d. an ell given by British law to British sail cloth, over foreign, for the British navy. Irish is now to have the
same

same preference. 5. The surplus of the hereditary revenue is to be applied in the first place to the purchase of Irish sail-cloth. All these give a glorious prospect for that valuable manufacture—But to return, were a man to look for the country most advantageous to settle manufacture in, what would be his choice? One where labour and provisions are cheap, that is Ireland; and what he would next look for?—why to have a rich, extended and steady market near him, which England, stretched along-side affords, and to establish that market for this country is one great object of this system. Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of British duties on our manufactures; I agree with them it may not operate soon, but we are to look forward in a final settlement, and it is impossible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we must be able to sell to them. When commercial jealousy shall be banished by final settlement, and trade take its natural and steady course, the kingdoms will cease to look to rivalry, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapest, and buy from the other what it cannot make so advantageously. Labour will

be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by duties, bounties, jealousies or legislative interference from its natural and beneficial course, this system will attain its real object, consolidating the strength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communications of their market among themselves, with preference to every part against all strangers.

I need not mention the Navigation Act, the proper benefits of which we have so long looked for; I will only observe, that Great Britain could never agree to receive the British Colonies' goods from us, unless we prohibited the goods of foreign Colonies as she does, which is a powerful argument for that part of the system against the constitutional phrensy that threatens it. Let us also observe, that now, for the first time, Great Britain offers us a right for ever in all present and future Colonies, without any reservation of power, to call on us either to procure, support, or preserve them; *she* maintains them, *we* share all the profits; and not only their goods, but all goods of Irish produce, are to pass through Britain duty free. Can foreign

reign nations, after this is settled, make distinction between British and Irish goods? Our manufactures will be united as our interests, and we shall laugh at Portugal folly.

I could run out for hours into the many benefits of this system but I have tired the House too long; let me only implore you not to reject this measure, for ill-founded, visionary objections, or to sacrifice realities to shadows. If this infatuated country gives up the present offer, she may look for it again in vain; things cannot remain as they are; commercial jealousy is roused, it will increase with two independent legislatures, if they don't mutually declare the principles whereby their powers shall be separately employed, in directing the common concerns of trade; and without an united interest of commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many shocks, and separation of interest must threaten separation of connexion, which every honest Irishman must shudder ever to look at as a possible event.

I will

I will only add, that if this measure be refused, Ireland will receive more solid injury than from any other evil that ever befel her; it is in vain for Gentlemen to think we can go on as we have done for some years—or to expect to cope with England in a destructive war of bounties—our situation must every day become more difficult, and it is impossible to foresee all the ruinous consequences that may ensue. — — —

AUGUST 15th, 1785,

Right Hon. *Chancellor of the Exchequer* [Mr. FOSTER] I rise to state the misconception of the Right Hon. Gentleman, and if any thing can shew the necessity of curing the people of their infatuation, by publishing and explaining the Bill to them, it surely is this, that a Gentleman to whom they look up, and justly look, as one whose wisdom and virtue will guard their rights, is so very much mistaken.

The Right Hon. Gentleman in his argument has never once adverted to the Bill on your table,
but

but draws all his conclusions from arguments raised by his own imagination, on the British Resolutions. He dwells now only on foreign Colony trade and Navigation laws; the accepting a full participation of the British Colony trade, upon terms of equal laws, he gives up as not altering our constitution, and he even agrees in the innocence of our declaring it as a principle of the treaty. In this he has shewn his wisdom, for it is already declared in the law of Ireland. The objection then stands as to a foreign Colony trade, and what says the Bill, it declares it to be a condition of the treaty, to protect that trade, in the same manner as Britain does, against the interference of foreign Colony goods. It enacts nothing, and there is the mighty evil which we have introduced, that is to give Britain the regulation of all our foreign trade with Portugal, with Spain, with all the world. If the Gentleman so egregiously mistakes the purport of what he has not read, I trust the good sense of the nation will see his mistakes and judge for themselves; but the objections to an agreement of rating only the goods from foreign Colonies, so far only as by protecting our Colonies against them,

them, is not so wonderful from him as his objection to the Bill's affecting Navigation and British seamen in general; from him I say, for in the year 1782 the Right Hon. Gentleman introduced in conjunction with the late Chief Baron Burgh, and the present Chief Baron Yelverton, a Bill, adopting in the gross all such clauses and provisions of the laws theretofore passed in England, as conveyed equal benefits and imposed equal restrictions in commerce, in the most extended sense, to the subjects of both countries, and also putting the seamen of Ireland on the footing of British seamen. [*The Chancellor here read the words.*] The Bill now brought in does not go so far; he went to commerce in general, and adopted laws without reference to them, or even reciting their title. What does this Bill do? it declares with him the principle; it does no more. This Bill declares for a *similarity of laws, manners, and custom*, in toto. Our Bill declares for a similarity of Navigation Laws, on our accepting the benefit of the British, not for the first time offered to us. It is idle to believe, even his authority can have weight in such unfounded objections: nay, *our* Bill reaches *his*,

to adopt its principles, and he says our is mischievous; his was the glory of the nation and the joint labour of the greatest friends of liberty.

The Right Hon. Gentleman says, “ we might have foreign trade, without entering into the measure, and that England, as to foreign trade, gives us no right which we already have not.” As to Colony Trade, he says, “ she gives us what we had before, on the former conditions, that we give her Colony product a preference in our market, and therefore, he says, cannot we remain as we now are.”

With respect to the Colony Trade, I answer, we hold it by the gift of Britain, and she may repeal her act, and reassume her monopoly. As to Foreign Trade, I have shewn it is no way affected, except by the preference to be given to British Colony goods, against those of Foreign Colonies; but why does the Gentleman allude to Portugal? it is the strongest measure against him. Portugal has presumed to distinguish between the goods of Great Britain and the goods of Ireland

—she

-- she will not receive the latter. But if this settlement is entered into, all our goods she can have may go duty free through Britain. The distinction between British and Irish manufacture is lost as to Foreign Nations, our goods, are made one, physically as well as politically, in respect to foreign, and our Union cemented by the freedom of intercourse.

The honourable gentleman seems, with others, to undervalue the British markets for our linens; and that if Britain shall discourage her imports, they will find vent elsewhere, I will not pay him so fullsome a compliment as to say he understands commerce, his genius soars perhaps above such reading; but if he did understand it, I would ask him, where would he expect a market to favour the linens of Ireland? Where will he find a market under Heaven for that manufacture, which now brings two millions annually into the kingdom? Will Portugal take them? Will Spain take them? Will France take them? No; we know they will not. Will Russia, Germany, or Holland take them? They are your powerful rivals, and able to undersel you. Where then
will

will you find a market, if England shuts her ports? Will you go to the West Indies?—you cannot go to the English Colonies—they will be like Britain—there you can have no admittance. The French, Spanish, and Portuguese have shut their ports long since—your only market then is in the *bankrupt* States of North America, that have not money to pay their just debts, and many provinces of which, if they had the money, have not perhaps the honesty to do it.

This bankrupt country is to give you the market Britain affords. No, no; cherish the market you have, you will never get so good, she ever exports with bounty for you. And here let me observe the benefits of exporting, duty free, all our fabrics through her ports, which this settlement secures. You first found the way for your linens to foreign places through her ports, by her capitals and extent of dealing;—do not refuse the like for your other fabrics—the prosperity of the linen should teach you.

The gentleman says England is as dependant on Ireland as Ireland is on England for her products—he instances the cotton yarn and other yarn of Ireland. What, call cotton yarn a fabric of Ireland, and an export to Britain!—It is a mistake of his expression, he cannot be so ignorant of our manufactures. Let us look into the wants Britain supplies—I will take coals first.

Do you think it an object of no consequence to receive coals from England, for ever, duty free while, the duties on coals in England, brought from one of her own ports to another is very high. I remember when I proposed a shilling a ton on the importation of coals into Dublin only, in order to raise a fund for extending and beautifying the city, it met with great opposition; I was abused in all the news papers; yet now England may raise four times that sum upon the export of her coals, which will fall upon the consumer, and raise a revenue for her advantage; nay were she even to raise the revenue on them to you that she does on her own coast carriage, what would become of you? You have

have not Irish coal; if the present bounty of 2s. a ton to Dublin, added to 1s. 8d. duty on British, which operates as 3s. 8d. in favour of Irish coal, what will you do; because no carriage can be so cheap to you as that across the channel. Rock salt is the next;—Where will you get it? (some one said from Spain) Rock salt from Spain! The gentleman should inform himself a little better.

f As to the tanning trade, where will you get bark? From no place in the world but England. We know that it would not bear the freight from any other, and if England was to prohibit the export of it, that trade must be at an end; and we must not forget, that the British manufacturers of leather have already complained, that by getting bark from Wales, we are enabled to work on as good terms as England.

Let him look to hops; will this country grow them? On the other hand, what wants do we supply for England? wool and linen yarn, to our own great advantage; but it is in vain to proceed; the House must see that we are talking of a subject not yet undeaftood; when known, and Ire-
land

land unprejudiced and in her calm reason, will never reject the many blessings it holds out to her trade;—it gives wealth and security which I trust will never be refused from a wild imagination of Utopian Republics, Commonwealths, Monarchies—God knows what.

I will stand or fall with the Bill, that not a line in it touches your Constitution; it is now left to the decision of the country, it is not abandoned, God forbid it should; and I trust I shall see the nation ask it at our hands, that we may be able then to obtain it shall be my prayers—the Minister cannot promise—he has done his duty—and it will be my pride at a future day, when its real value shall be known, that I bore a leading share in the transaction—that I laboured to procure for Ireland solid and substantial benefits, which even two years ago no man had an idea of even looking to.

SUBSTANCE
OF THE
SPEECH
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD SHEFFIELD,
Monday, April 22, 1799,
UPON THE SUBJECT OF
UNION WITH IRELAND.

PRINTED FROM A COPY CORRECTED BY HIS LORDSHIP.

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1799.

S U B S T A N C E
OF THE
S P E E C H
OF
L O R D S H E F F I E L D.

April 22, 1799.

&c. &c.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the order of the day for taking into consideration the Address from the Lords upon the subject of the Union with Ireland; which being read, he moved that the said Address be now taken into consideration.

The Address was then read twice, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, That this House do concur with the said Address.

Lord SHEFFIELD spoke as follows:

Mr. Speaker,

Sir, I wish it to be understood, that I support the resolutions and address, in confidence that the assurance given by a noble Lord in an official situation in Ireland will be strictly observed, namely, that Ministers will *look to the sense of Parliament and of the Country*, before the measure of Union shall again be brought forward there; and that assurance being given, I am not sensible of any sufficient argument that should prevent the British Parliament from giving some general explanation of the arrangement it is disposed to make, more especially as I observe that scarcely any man in this country objects to the principle of the measure; nor can I suppose, that a nation so well informed and so much accustomed to political considerations as the Irish, should for a long time persevere in refusing to receive or examine what may be proposed from the British Parliament; and for these reasons I wish to trouble the House with a few observations.

We cannot be much surprized at the alarm which has taken place in Ireland. The word Union was suffered to be bandied about there for many months without the slightest attempt on the part of Ministers to explain the terms of it.

it. The aid of designing men, and of those prejudiced from partial and local considerations, was scarcely necessary to take advantage of this circumstance: the apprehensions of Ireland had always been, that an equal and favourable Union would not be granted: and no small part of that people were made to believe, that their liberty, their independence, their dignity, and almost the existence of the nation, would be done away by their becoming one and the same with the most independent and most respectable nation in the world.

But, in truth, the measure of Union was ill-prepared for Ireland, and Ireland was ill-prepared for Union. It is not without competent information that I am convinced, if the outline of the liberal proposition for Union, which is now offered, had been at first properly communicated and with all the plainness and candour which suit the Irish character, it would have been very differently received; and it is not my opinion alone, but the opinion also of those who are not friendly to the measure, that it might have been accepted, at least it would have prevented all that misrepresentation and misapprehension which might well be expected, without some previous attention. I can hardly imagine a case, in respect to which, until understood, more jealousy was likely to be entertained than

than this of a legislative Union, otherwise the measure being really so necessary and so advantageous to Ireland, the strange abuse of the words "Dignity and Independencce," which have been so entirely mistaken there would have made little impression. I can suppose it will be unpleasing at first to acknowledge, that the premature opposition was the result of an ill-founded jealousy. Yet that acknowledgment, and the consequent departure from an *hasty* opposition to the measure, is no more than may be fairly expected from the candid openness of the Irish character.

It is not now the question whether the measure has been brought forward and conducted as it should have been, but whether the British Parliament should do what depends on it to obviate the mischief which must arise from independent and separate Legislatures existing within the same empire, whether we should relinquish a measure which seems necessary to the general security and welfare, or take the present opportunity of stating the outline of it.

I shall not trouble the House with a repetition of historical inquiry into the causes of the present state of Ireland, nor with many references to the reports of the Lords and Commons of that kingdom. The causes and the proofs
are

are but too plain. The notoriety of numberless melancholy facts, which demonstrate the wretched and dangerous condition of that country, with reason alarms every thinking man: it is an unanimous opinion in this country, that something is necessary to be done to preserve Ireland; and there seems to be almost a general conviction, that it can be done only by a legislative Union.

For my part, I cannot see the measure in any other light than that of being absolutely necessary. It has long been my opinion, and every thing which has happened *in* Ireland, and in respect to Ireland during the last twenty years, particularly that which took place in 1782, and was whimsically enough called "Final Adjustment," have convinced me of that necessity.

When it was found proper to take off the shackles from the Irish Parliament, and highly proper it was, a Union should have been proposed, and by the same measure only should all the commercial and other advantages have been communicated, which were so indiscriminately conceded without terms since 1778. It would have been still better, if an Union had taken place in the beginning of the century, and that the Constitution and Commerce of Great Britain, which had been so long and so invidiously withheld, had been then communicated to Ireland

land. But in 1782, the administration of that day, without supplying any means of keeping these kingdoms together, rashly gave away the dependence of the two islands on each other ; and now there is no certainty in the connexion of Great Britain and Ireland. Independance of Legislature seems to have suggested notions of separation, which appeared, in some degree, as early as 1784. However, even those who attempt to justify what was done in 1782, must acknowledge, that there were points of essential consequence left unsettled, and that it should not have been postponed to the hour of difficulty and distress to arrange and ascertain the relative exertions and political connexions of the two countries.

Much has been said on the words “ Final Adjustment :” but that which is so called, only referred to the then asserted independence of Parliament, and by no means precluded Union: on the contrary, it was the opinion at the time, that *farther* measures were necessary to establish a connexion on a solid and permanent basis: and so far as I understand what was intended, I consider *that* adjustment as putting the Irish Parliament on the footing of independence and free deliberation, and in that situation alone which could satisfy the people of Ireland, that the acts of their Parliament would be thenceforward
free

free and uncontrouled; but at any rate it is trifling to suppose, that nothing more was to be attempted, if that which had been done had not the effect of preserving the connexion and attachment of the two countries. It is true that Union became more necessary, as well as more difficult, in consequence of what was done in 1782, and also in 1793, when the principle of our navigation and colonial laws were, without terms or occasion, sacrificed by the act which permits goods and commodities of the growth, production, or manufacture, of Asia, Africa, or America, to be imported from Ireland into Great Britain. All these benefits should have been reserved as the means of Union, but being then unconditionally granted, they have rendered that measure much less sought for by Ireland; and I confess that the strongest objection I felt to the propositions that were brought forward in the British Parliament in 1785, (which by no means would have done what it is necessary to do,) arose from the apprehension, that if carried, they might prevent an Union. It was obvious, that if all the reserved advantages of Great Britain were to be given up, there would be no means of future negotiation remaining.

Previously to that period, Ireland would have petitioned for an Union, and I think she might well do so now as the greatest possible acquisition she could make; but neither the adjust-
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ment in question, nor all the commercial concessions, nor other means employed to tranquilize that country, have had the least effect. The bad state of Ireland yearly became worse. It appears the parties are not to be satisfied; that no melioration of the condition of Ireland has taken place; that a great proportion of the people is now as ill disposed to Government, as bigoted, as ignorant, and as uncivilized as they were at the time of the massacre in 1641. At present the permanency of the connexion of Great Britain with Ireland depends on the parties which exist, and ever must exist, in a nation of Protestants and Roman Catholics so peculiarly interested against, and politically hostile to each other. These divisions are the bane of the country, never to be annihilated but by a legislative Union. The whole present system is bad. The change of Government, at least every four years, and the concessions so regularly made under the vain notion of satisfying the people, create and promote schemes and suggestions inconsistent with the tranquillity of the country, and encourage agitators, whose uniform object it is, to disturb the public mind.

I have observed, that independence of Parliament suggested the idea of separation. Irrational notions of independence, leading to dissolution of Government, must end in civil war and the introduction of the French. Manufactures

tures and agriculture would then cease much more suddenly than they could possibly revive, and whatever might be the event, Ireland would be completely ruined, and England greatly distressed. But supposing the crisis in question should not immediately come on, Ireland would continue in its present disturbed state, and England would ever find Ireland the back door to conspiracy, rebellion, and invasion. And so miserably distracted is Ireland at present, that among three millions of Roman Catholics, and half a million of Dissenters, there is scarcely a man capable of a political idea, who does not wish for something different from that which is; namely, a Change of the Church Establishment, the Abolition of Tithes, a Parliamentary Reform, or a Republic: nor are the members of the established Church entirely free from the same unhappy temper of mind. The common enemies of mankind will not fail to take advantage of this state of things: they have raised it into a dangerous and formidable conspiracy, and it seems the only means through which they can hope of succeeding in their favourite plan of destroying the British empire.

Nothing can be more dangerous than a notion, that a coalition of Churchmen, Dissenters, and Catholics, for the purpose of separation, cannot take place. The reports of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, and what has hap-

pened lately, completely prove, that such a coalition is not merely possible, but that it actually exists, and that the foundations of it are laid, and deeply laid, already.

This subject has been so fully and so ably discussed, that it is not necessary to state how general, how great, and how irremediable by common means, are the mischief and danger : the unexampled perilous state of Ireland is well known ; it was therefore evidently the duty of His Majesty's Ministers to bring forward some measure to prevent even the possibility of so great a calamity as the separation of the two countries ; and however I may differ in opinion with His Majesty's Ministers in respect to the conduct of this business, I acknowledge great merit in their undertaking such an arduous task at a time they were so fully engaged in the most momentous concerns, and in their not shrinking from the difficulties which obviously might present themselves, and which too often induce Ministers to adopt some temporary expedient (just to serve their turn) which never effectually succeeds. but in the end produces greater difficulty and much mischief. It seems also highly incumbent on the British Parliament to take early the most effectual steps to promote the proper remedy : and every thing has been tried, except that which is now obviously the best and only means, an Union, and which, in consequence

quence of the wild opinions that are abroad, and the disturbed state of the world, has become still more necessary. Every concession has been made, many colonial and commercial advantages, which Ireland could not on any reasonable ground claim without an Union, have been communicated to her: in short, every thing has been granted so far, that we are now told by the enemies of Union, Ireland cannot acquire more by that measure, and that she does not desire greater freedom and extension of trade, than she at present possesses, preferring her independence and dignity as a nation. They surely have odd notions of independence and dignity who prefer holding almost the whole of their trade, almost their existence at the discretion of another country, rather than by *right* as a part of that country.

But I should not do justice if I did not acknowledge this way of thinking is by no means general, and that the two largest counties, Cork and Galway, and the city of Cork, county of Clare, and other districts of Ireland, had expressed the contrary, and so well, that I wish to make use of their own words. Speaking of Union, the county of Cork says :

County of Cork. { We are firmly persuaded it would add to the welfare, the credit, and the immediate prosperity of Ireland and that by the uniting our strength in the closest manner with the most free, and most happy people on earth, we should exert the best possible means in our power for preserving the safety, the honour, and the security of our dearest rights. Determined, therefore, as we are to stand or fall with Great Britain, we look forward with the

the greatest anxiety to this connexion, as the most effectual means of putting an end to all our factions and religious animosities, and of reconciling the people of Ireland to each other, by doing away all ill-founded jealousies between fellow-subjects.

We consider it as most obviously and indispensably necessary to the prosperity of this kingdom in general, and to the restoration of that tranquillity and industry, which alone can render the inhabitant prosperous and happy, and most likely in its consequences to reclaim the deluded people from those habits of violence and outrage to a sense of their duty to the laws of their country, and the best of Kings.

City of Cork. { To become a constituent part of that empire, to whose protection we owe our political existence, and whose Constitution is the admiration of the civilized world : to participate in those resources, which are inexhaustable : to become joint proprietors of that navy, which is irresistible, and to share in that commerce which knows no bounds, are objects beyond which our most sanguine wishes for the prosperity of Ireland cannot possibly extend : while the prospect, which they hold forth of terminating the jarring interest of party, and reconciling the jealous distinctions of religion, promises, a restoration of that tranquillity to which this country has been too long a stranger.

County of Galway. { We are persuaded, that a legislative Union with Great Britain, established on terms of perfect equality, would invigorate the resources, increase the wealth, and add materially to the security of both countries, enabling them to oppose their common enemy with increased strength and power, and most effectually to defeat their object of dividing the empire for the purpose of subduing it. To consider this measure as it affects either country separately, we conceive to be a narrow view of its object : but even in that confined sense of it, we are firmly convinced it would add to the welfare, the credit, and the immediate prosperity of Ireland : and we are of opinion, that uniting our strength in the closest manner with the wisest, the freest, and the happiest people upon earth, with whom we must necessarily stand or fall, is so far from a sacrifice of the honour and independence of Ireland, that it is the best means left to us for preserving both.

These addresses are most respectably signed ;
and a third address from the county of Cork,
nearly

nearly in the same words, has the signature of 373 of the principal Nobility, Bishops, Magistrates, Clergy, and persons of property, both Protestants and Catholics : and there is reason to believe, that the sentiments therein expressed are much more general in the several counties which have not addressed than has been supposed.

Although Ireland has acquired much which should only have been conceded by Union, it is not true that she cannot obtain farther commercial advantages by that measure. The best market, that of Great Britain, for all Irish manufactures, is still reserved, except linens, and her linens are become one of the greatest manufactures in the world, entirely in consequence of having that market, and could never have been carried on to its present great extent, unless aided by the prompt payment of Great Britain, which in a great degree acts as a supply of capital *.

Six

* The bounties on the export of Irish linens from hence at the same time that they gave to Great Britain about an eight of the trade in those articles, encourage the manufacture in Ireland. The average of bounties on the export of linens for the last four years is nearly 34,700*l*.

Irish linens exported from Great Britain on an		Yards
average of the last four years, entitled to bounty	-	4,866,015
Ditto not entitled to bounty	- - - - -	964,507

Total of Irish linens exported from Great Britain	-	5,830,522
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The

Six parts in seven of the whole exports of linen from Ireland are imported into Great Britain, and of the seventh part the greatest proportion goes to America, including the West Indies. On an average of four years, ending the 25th of March 1798,

	Yards
were exported from Ireland	39,885,776
of which to Great Britain -	33,695,659
To the British Colonies in America and Islands in the West Indies * - - - - -	1,285,998
To the States of America - - - - -	4,012,519
To foreign parts of Europe and to Africa - - - - -	891,530

being about a 44th part of the whole export of linens from Ireland.

Linens are the only Irish manufacture properly so called, which has the advantage of the British market, and it has flourished accord-

The duties laid on the import of foreign linens for the purpose of protecting the British linen manufacture are about 25 per cent. of their real value, and give almost the monopoly of the British market to many articles of the Irish linen manufacture. The duties paid on foreign linen used in this country, on the same average, amount to £15,000. If the same rate of duties had been laid on Irish linens imported and used in this island under the usual policy of protecting the British manufacture, as is done in all like cases, it would raise a revenue of about 650,000l.

* In this are not included Irish linens exported from Great Britain to the British Colonies and to the American States, but only the quantities sent directly from Ireland to the places mentioned.

ingly.

ingly. No manufacture, no trade of Ireland, except such as are duty free, or have particular advantages in the British market, have succeeded. Linens, corn, and the produce of cattle, which alone have those advantages, amount on an average of the last three years to 5,410,825 when the total value of all Irish imports into Great Britain were 5,612,689 of which there were articles not the manufacture and produce of Ireland to the amount of - - - - - 101,864

So that the articles of Irish growth or manufacture, which are not duty free, or have no particular exemption or advantage in British ports, amount only to - - - 100,781 and form a small proportion, indeed, of the great importation from Ireland into Great Britain alone amounting to 5,612,689, which, stated in the manner most favourable to Ireland, is, at least, six parts in seven of the whole export trade of Ireland to all parts.

We cannot be surpris'd, that wollen and other manufactures have decreased in Ireland during the late turbulent state of that country. We may rather wonder, that they have not been more affected; but such articles as have the peculiar

culiar advantage of the British market, have even lately increased. The manufactures and commerce of Ireland are now, and have always been, greatly inferior to what they may be ; it is reasonable therefore to suppose, that when the present prohibitory duties which were laid on manufactures coming from all parts to protect those of England, are, in respect to Irish manufactures, equalized, as intended by the articles of Union, and they shall have the advantage of the British market the same as linens ; the produce of cattle and corn, they may also flourish.

No country is better circumstanced for manufactures than Ireland. She has plenty of water and fuel *, the first requisites in manufactures. The encouragement to her industry will be great, especially as it will be impossible to countervail the difference of price of labour and

* Most parts of Ireland, where, through want of skill and wealth, coals have not yet been raised, particularly the manufacturing districts, are accessible by water, and near the coasts of England and Wales, which abound in coals. Ireland may have that article cheaper from the West and North-West of England and from Wales, than it can go coastwise to many places in Great Britain where great manufactories are carried on which consume large quantities of that article. Coals from Great Britain to Ireland pay only an export duty of 14d. per chaldron, when the same article carried coastwise to London pays a duty of 9s. 3d per chaldron, and to any other part of England 5s. 9d. If Ireland does not think it necessary to protect her own collieries by any import duty, she may cheapen the price of coals to her manufacturers by taking off the duty of 1s. 9d. per ton on the import of that article into Dublin, and of 9d. into

and of excises in the two countries *, and commercial men will acknowledge the superior advantage of a near market, and a quick return, so absolutely necessary to a country wanting capital.

If Union should take place, there will be no jealousy, no warfare of bounties and drawbacks, no invidious wish to check the prosperity of Ireland, or any manufacture there, and the great commercial advantages of Ireland will no longer be held at the pleasure of another country.

The prosperity of Ireland, such as it is, in no degree arose from the independency of the Irish Parliament, but from commercial advantages derived from great Britain. I hesitated when I first heard that a contrary opinion came from a man as able, as respectable, and at least, as well informed, as any in the two islands—but the assertion that the prosperity of Ireland arose from the independence of her Parliament, appears to me so entirely unsupported by fact, that I scarcely know how to reason about it, except by asking, whether the increase of the linen manufac-

into all other parts of Ireland. The passage from the English collieries is short, and the freight is moderate. And it may be observed, that inferior sorts of coals answer the purpose of manufacture, and that the bogs of Ireland furnish plenty of excellent peat or turf.

* Import duties in the two countries may be equalized, or the difference of those duties on raw materials may be paid on import of the article or manufacture, of which it is made.

ture ; whether the prosperity of the beef, pork, and butter-trade ; whether the growth of a grain of corn, or a blade of grass ; whether the opening of the ports of Great Britain to Irish corn at a lower price than from other countries, have been affected by the independence of the Irish Parliament : in short, which article of growth or export has increased in consequence of it ? Have the laws been better executed ? Has the country been more tranquil ? Are life and property more safe ? In truth, I can trace little to that event but the present disturbed state of Ireland. I repeat, that the prosperity of Ireland entirely depends on the connexion with and advantages derived from Great Britain, without which her trade would be almost nothing—and this appears so perfectly evident, that I consider it not to be necessary to add a syllable more to prove it.

When Ireland has acquired the British Constitution, a due execution of laws and tranquillity, and that life and property are secure there, English capitals will undoubtedly be employed in Ireland, and then her prosperity will be real and permanent. At present no prudent man will lend one shilling to that country in any shape, far less will a commercial or manufacturing man risk his capital in any speculation, where a spirit of unfriendly independence, of separation and of rebellion so strongly prevails—but surely it is not
commercial

commercial advantage and wealth only that are wanting to Ireland. She is deficient in the most essential of all things, good order and well-executed laws. Life and property are not more secure there, than among the most disturbed people upon earth. A residence there is as much to be avoided as in countries subject to the most hideous tyranny or savage banditti.

It is curious, especially at this time, that apprehensions are expressed that the number of absentees will be greatly increased by an Union. There are now infinitely a greater number of Irish emigrants, for the sake of personal safety, than will be occasioned if a Union should be adopted. If that measure should take place, few families will follow those who are called to Parliament: if they make the experiment, the difference of expence will soon check the evil: and those that occasionally become absentees, will be so by choice, not by compulsion.

It will not be improper in this place to state, with the view of removing wrong impressions, that the number and property of absentees have been always greatly exaggerated, and also the bad effects of the consequent drain of money.

Those who are most capable of examining the question agree, that the remittance to regular
absentees

absentees is below 600,000l., I believe considerably, which is not more than one-fifth of the value of the exports of linens alone to this country, amounting to, at least, three millions. According to the common valuation, it may not always appear so much, because they are rated, at most, at 1s. 6d. per yard, even now that their quality is much improved; but if valued at only 19d., linen and linen yarn will, on an average of the last three years, amount to a larger sum than I have mentioned, and more than balance all the imports of Great Britain—including raw materials, as well as remittances to absentees. The imports of the product and manufacture of Ireland into Great Britain on an average of the last three years,

being	-	-	-	5,510,825
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and all imports of the produce or manufacture of Great Britain into Ireland	-	-	-	2,087,672
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3,425,153

So that there is a balance of upwards of 2,800,000 in favour of Ireland, allowing an actual remittance of 600,000l. to absentees.

The above is the statement of the interchange of produce and manufacture. Besides which, Ireland imports from Great Britain at present,
in

in consequence of her being obliged to avail herself of British capital, and of her limited commerce, except with Great Britain,

Of colonial articles	-	-	970,000
Of foreign merchandize	-	-	498,173
			<hr/>
			1,468,173

And England receives from Ireland
of colonial and foreign merchandize

- - - 101,874

which gives a balance to England on
foreign and colonial importation
of - - -

1,366,309

and if deducted from the above balance of 2,800,000, will still on the whole, stating the trade and remittances in the most favourable manner for Ireland, leave a balance of 1,433,691. in favour of the latter country.

It should be observed, that while the imports of the produce and manufacture of Ireland into Great Britain are in a progressive state of certain increase, on the other hand, the imports of foreign and colonial articles from Great Britain into Ireland are in a course of decrease; but I proceed to considerations of more consequence to both countries.

I am little disposed to argue in favour of non-residence, but I must observe, that those parts of
Ireland,

Ireland, as well as of England, where manufactures flourish, are remarkable for the non-residence of land proprietors. Yet, in general, I consider their absence as the greatest misfortune, and I conceive one of the most essential advantages of England over Ireland arises from the residence of that class of men, and from their great attention to the people, and to all the details of the country round them. In Ireland, the intermediate man, a person between the owner and occupier, who holds land from the resident, as well as from the absentee, has no permanent interest in the improvement of it.—His income depends on the exaction of the utmost, that can be got from an under tenant for the land, and to this circumstance much of the unimproved State of Ireland may be attributed. But we cannot be surprized, that men of fortune in Ireland should now reside in villas near the metropolis, or absent themselves, when we recollect the uncivilized state of the country. At present it cannot be expected from them, nor is it safe, and unless some great change should happen, which will induce and enable men of fortune to live there, and to instruct, protect, and encourage the people, civilization will go on very slowly.

All the same objections which are urged in Ireland against an Union, were made by Scotland

land at the time of her Union with England, and every mischief was predicted, but they all proved unfounded. Arguments, which came from some of the ablest men of those times, and which then appeared almost conclusive, are completely refuted by experience. It was said, that Edinburgh would be deserted and ruined; the same is now said of Dublin: but since Union, the size of Edinburgh, and the number of her inhabitants, have been more than doubled, and the city beautified in a high degree. All Scotland is greatly improved, her population increased, she is ten times more rich since that period: her people are civilized, the laws are now executed, life and property are secure; the Legislatures of the two kingdoms no longer at variance as heretofore, and at the risk of rupture each counteracting the other. Few families of property are now constantly absentees, and almost without exception, those Scotchmen, who go from home and acquire a fortune, in the end carry it to Scotland. Before the Union, Scotland had scarcely any thing worthy the name of a manufacture: all her efforts to obtain a foreign or colonial trade had failed, but now her manufactures and trade are as great in proportion as those of England. And all these advantages are greatly beyond the progressive improvement which would have taken place with-

out an Union, and without which many of them never could have taken place.

The alarm in the city of Dublin on the subject of Union is said to be greater and more just than elsewhere, but I am perfectly satisfied that her apprehensions are unfounded. The absence of 80 Commoners and 30 Lords, even supposing them constantly resident before, certainly cannot ruin Dublin. The Lord Lieutenant, the principal officers of every kind, the Courts of Justice will still remain. She will still continue the Winter residence of the principal people of fortune, as Edinburgh does. She will be the seat of education, of amusement, and of the arts. Her trade will increase greatly. The complete intercourse and exchange of commodities which will be established by an Union, will raise her commerce beyond what the most sanguine man has ever yet imagined. Cork, Waterford, and Limerick, will have a great proportion of the provision and other trade ; but Dublin will be the great mart for the import and export, particularly of manufactures. Dublin will have the great trade to the most thriving port, perhaps, in the world ; I mean Liverpool. The trade of Ireland with England will be carried on with most security, especially in time of war, between those ports. Every article of foreign and British manufacture and
produce

produce which Ireland does not furnish or import immediately from the place of growth or of manufacture, she may have from thence. Almost all the widely-extended inland navigation of England points to Liverpool, and may supply what is wanted to advantage. As Ireland imports but a small proportion of her consumption of West-India articles directly from the place of growth, Dublin is well situated for supplies of those articles from Bristol and Liverpool in return for her exports to those places. The corn trade will become a prodigious article, if the produce of the two islands should by an Union be put on the same footing as between two counties in England. The great inland navigations of Ireland will convey corn at a cheaper rate to Dublin, even from Limerick and Connaught, much cheaper than by a circuitous and precarious voyage by sea. The canal tolls on corn and flour should, in favour of Dublin, be purchased at the public expence, or greatly reduced ; and the same should be done in respect to the docks in the port of Dublin. This would facilitate the intercourse between the two countries, and be a mutual advantage to them both ; and would ultimately benefit Dublin much more than the residence of those who would be sent to the united Parliament. Dublin would become the warehouse of the corn of

that kingdom for the steady and certain corn markets of the North-west of Great Britain and the North of Ireland, where a very small part of the consumption of the inhabitants can possibly be grown. The English farmer may at first be alarmed, when he hears, that Ireland will be considered as part of England in respect to the corn-trade ; but the advantages will be reciprocal, and the effect, which some may apprehend from an influx of corn more than sufficient, cannot take place. Unfortunately we constantly import as much oats as Ireland can spare at any time, at present double the quantity, and that evil is increasing rather than decreasing. She is well situated to furnish that part of Great Britain, which will always require a supply of that kind of corn, and the quantity of wheat she is ever likely to spare will not be sufficient to overload the British markets. It will be much less mischievous to the growers of wheat in England to have the ports regularly and constantly open to the limited quantity that can come from Ireland, than to have them open to a glut of corn from all parts of the world for three months certain ; the moment the smallest proportion of the consumption of this country is wanting, the moment its price becomes what is by no means extravagant, but on the contrary, while it is moderate, considering the increased expence of tillage. The opening of our ports for three months certain to all the world, when

we only want a moderate quantity, may reduce the price of wheat ruinously low ; but the comparatively small quantity that could come from Ireland, would have no farther effect than supplying what may be actually wanted. When Ireland has a constantly open market in Great Britain for corn, it will prove the greatest encouragement to her farmers to change their slovenly management. At present their corn is exported in so bad a state, that it must meet the corn of other countries at market to great disadvantage. When they have a steady market, they will soon find the necessity of preparing and dressing their corn in a manner that will enable it to bear a competition with the corn of England.

It has been suggested, that the manufactures of Ireland, and particularly the linen trade, would suffer through the want of a resident Parliament. The principal manufactures and commerce of Scotland are situated at a greater distance from London than those of Ireland, and they became what they are since the Union of the Parliaments; yet there has never been the slightest complaint in respect to necessary protection and assistance from the British Parliament : and perhaps it may not improperly be observed in this place, that no disadvantage whatever has arisen to the affairs of Scotland in consequence of her having only forty-five
Members

Members in the British Parliament, but they have been as well attended to and as well managed as those of England by upwards of five hundred Members, and the government of Scotland has been administered since Union as vigilantly and more impartially than before, and the same, in all probability, will be the case in respect to Ireland.

The objection to Union on the part of the Protestants of Ireland is unaccountable: they can hardly be said to constitute a nation: they are an English colony governing upwards of three millions of Roman Catholics, or, at least, six times their own number in a country acquired and maintained by English arms and treasure, which colony never could have supported itself; and even the last Summer would have been overwhelmed, unless protected by the same means by English power. They cannot disdain that description; many of them, I am sure, are sensible, that such is their situation, and that their consequence and security depend on the connexion with the Mother Country. In respect to the Roman Catholics, Union alone can make it safe to satisfy their claims. By Union, all that enmity, jealousy, and contrariety of interest, which naturally arise between those two unequal bodies, must soon cease. The Protestants will lose nothing; I am satisfied their object was not monopoly, but safety: they will be safe, and relieved from all apprehensions, and may have a better

better tenantry, and more attached to their interest. The Roman Catholics may acquire all they can desire ; and I hope we shall never again hear of Protestant ascendancy or Catholic emancipation, words which have been very insidiously employed to the worst purposes. On cool reflexion it will appear, that Ireland will not incur any disadvantage, but the advantages to be gained by her are the greatest that can be conceived, and, in the first place, security and tranquillity, as it is reasonable to suppose, that an identity of Constitution and a due execution of the Laws, will produce the same effects in Ireland as they have done in Great Britain, and particularly in Scotland within this century. Till Union takes place, and not till then, will the theoretical independence of Ireland become practical. Ireland, in truth, is now actually dependent on England through her divisions, through her trade, and through her Constitution. Either the Protestants or the Catholics will depend on English support. It has been shewn, that the trade of Ireland is absolutely dependent on that of England ; and the King of Great Britain being subject to British laws, in obeying him, and under the necessary controul of his Ministers, Ireland must in some sort be dependent : but supposing two perfectly independent Legislatures within the same empire, they must always be considered as in an uncertain and perilous state, mutually inconvenient to each other, and always cherishing discontent
and

and jealousy. If one Parliament exerts powers in opposition to those of the other, what must be the consequences? They are so obvious, that it would be an abuse of time to state them. We cannot reflect with much satisfaction on the only two instances which have occurred since the independence of the Irish Legislature, wherein the two Parliaments could act oppositely to each other. The rejection of the commercial propositions in 1785, on the part of Ireland, has not obtained the applause, even in that country, of the well-informed, and the conduct which was held on the occasion of appointing a Regency evinced a disposition to risk the mischiefs which might be expected to arise from the clashing of two independent parliaments. In short, if the sort of independence which is claimed has any meaning, it leads to separation—Union or separation must take place; for it seems agreed on all sides, that the countries cannot go on as they are.

Soon after the accession of James the First to the Thrones of these kingdoms, that wise Statesman and Counsellor, Sir Francis Bacon, strongly recommended an Union between England and Scotland. He clearly saw how faulty and precarious the fortunate junction of the two countries would be, if only supported by the circumstances of having the same King. He proposed a complete Union. He recommends highly the liberal system of the Romans, observing, that the naturalizations

ralizations were, in effect, perpetual mixtures, not only with persons, but with cities and countries ; and adds, that there never were any States that were good commixtures but the Romans. He also observes, that the conduct of other kingdoms has been different, and consequently the addition of farther empire and territory has been rather a matter of burden than of strength, and kept alive the seeds of revolt and rebellion for many ages. And he adds, that Arragon was united to Castile by a marriage ; but after an hundred years, a civil war commenced in consequence of the bad policy of not incorporating, but leaving it a separate Government ; and if he had lived as late as these times, he might have stated much stronger cases. Machiavel also attributes the growth of the Roman Empire to the good policy in incorporating so easily with strangers ; and Molyneux, the strenuous asserter of the independence of the Irish parliament, says, an Union on equal terms would be highly advantageous to Ireland, and the best means of enjoying that independence ; and the Irish parliament, in the beginning of this century, expressed a desire for an entire Union. But the times were not so enlightened as they now are, and a narrow policy prevented the participation of those liberal, fair, and equal terms, which are now offered to Ireland. The present Chief Baron of Ireland, one of the first constitutional authorities of that kingdom, and a successful supporter of the Irish independence in 1782, has

asserted, that the independence of the Irish parliament was most valuable, because it would enable Ireland to treat for a Union upon fair terms.

The Union of Wales and Scotland with England, the Union of Bretagne, Dauphiny, and other provinces with France, the Union of the several kingdoms of Spain, all of which, while independent, were greatly prejudicial to each other, proved highly advantageous to the different countries and to the empires, in proportion to the completeness of legislative Union that took place ; and the sensible Americans soon discovered how dangerous their situation would be, if they remained separate independent States.

Every advantage that was expected, and more than was expected, has been derived from the Union of Scotland. No country was ever more disturbed before and at the time. Nothing could tend more directly to separation than the act of security which passed in the parliament of Scotland just before that event : a great proportion of the people of all ranks were as ill-disposed towards England as the worst disposed of the Irish. The Clans were as much out of the reach of the law as any part of Ireland can be supposed to be. To carry fire and sword from one district into another, was as much the disposition of the Highlanders, as it has been lately of White-boys and Defenders in Ireland. The taste and fashion of
the

the people were to be in a situation to commit hostilities, and the chief men of the country, instead of endeavouring to excite the industry of their dependants, only valued themselves in proportion to the number of those who were disposed to follow them in arms. Notwithstanding the Crowns of the two kingdoms had been annexed above an hundred years, a connexion with France was still kept up, and the most dangerous intrigues carried on. I shall only add, that although the causes or motives were not precisely the same, the effects were ; and many other instances of the disorders, and of the resemblance of the situation of Scotland at that time to the present state of Ireland might easily be stated, and that all those circumstances which disturbed Scotland, as much as Ireland now is, have been done away by Union.

Nature has given many local advantages to Ireland. Union will give her a Constitution that is deemed the best ; will give her tranquillity, wealth, and character ; and money will be lent in Ireland, when settled, with as much confidence as in England. Those who are now absentees would find the advantage of residing there. Englishmen would risk their persons and property in that country, which, if not immediately, will in time, become as civilized as Great Britain.

On the whole, it may be confidently pronounced, Union is most necessary, and will be most beneficial

neficial to Ireland. The plan seems formed for
 peculiar, although I will not say for her exclusive,
 advantage, and as a partial friend I could not pro-
 pose anything more favourable for her. Yet it by no
 means follows, that the great advantages of
 Union to Ireland will be counterbalanced by
 disadvantages to Great Britain, or that the gain
 of Ireland will be the loss of Great Britain.
 In a long course of years, even if the measure
 of Union should not take place, manufactures
 and trade will decline in some places when they
 redouble from various circumstances in others :
 but possible local disadvantages must not pre-
 vent the Legislature from looking to the gene-
 ral good. It must be admitted, the prosperity
 of Ireland would be the prosperity of Great
 Britain. The inefficient state of a part is a
 great loss to the whole. The unsettled state of
 that country is a general drawback from the
 prosperity of the empire, every part of which
 will find the advantage of that high degree of
 improvement which the assimilation of the two
 countries would effect. Great additional
 strength, and security and general prosperity to
 Great Britain and to the Empire, will be the
 consequence of Union, and the attention of
 the Executive Government would not here-
 after, amidst the distresses of war, and at the
 moment of the utmost peril, be distracted by
 conspiracies and rebellion in Ireland.

Perhaps no circumstance in the character of
 the commercial and manufacturing interests,
 and

and of the people in general in Great Britain, gives a greater proof of their liberality and good sense, than their acquiescence on this occasion in some possible sacrifice of manufactures, of commerce, and of constitution, for the sake of unity and tranquillity of empire : The energies of commerce surpass, and sometimes contradict, the most plausible calculations—and even in a commercial light England might be benefited by a great increase of manufactures and commerce in Ireland, inasmuch as Ireland will be better enabled to pay for the many articles she will continue to take from England. We all know that much commercial advantage cannot be obtained by trading with a nation which is not rich, especially when the produce of the two countries is the same. The interchange of commodities will animate trade ; and no intelligent man will say, that the manufactures of England have decreased in consequence of the great increase of manufactures in Scotland. But those who will give themselves the trouble of examining the question will find, that the two countries are mutually benefited by the prosperous state of their respective manufactures and commerce, and that competition encourages skill and industry, and promotes and enforces good regulations, and consequent cheapness of manufacture. In respect to revenue, the empire will be highly benefited—for with the increase of wealth, there will be as great increase in the excise and customs—and when we enumerate the commercial
and

and other advantages that would be derived from an Union, we should not forget the mischiefs that would be avoided, and that the final termination of the antient alliances, the connexion, and the intrigues of France with Scotland, and all projects of separation, were at last effected by the Union of Great Britain.

In respect to the incompetence of Parliament, it is difficult to believe that that objection is at this time seriously urged: if it is, it only convinces me there is great want of argument against the measure of Union. The argument would throw us back to first principles; that is, the dissolution of Government, and to that jargon which has nearly ruined Europe. This doctrine was ably refuted at the time of the Union with Scotland; if it had not, it would ill suit the pretensions of Ireland to establish it.

If I should be asked, whether I am satisfied that Union will produce order and steady prosperity in Ireland, I should answer, that I am. The same violence and machinations which exist at present to effect separation might possibly be attempted at first; but when Ireland is irrevocably become a part of Great Britain, there would gradually and soon be an end of speculations and conspiracies. France would no longer speculate on distinct governments and interests. The enemies of order would not be tempted by any prospect of success: they would recollect, that it is
not

not Ireland alone, but the three kingdoms, that must be induced to sacrifice or yield their Constitution : and, as was the case in Scotland, when the people of that country, who had been so averse to Union, had tasted the sweets of that measure, they became the most strenuous supporters of it; inasmuch, that when it was the object to raise a rebellion there, it was found that a declaration against Union would be unpopular and hurt the cause.

It may appear extraordinary, that so much should be said in this House to prove the advantage of Union to Ireland; but the arguments are not so misapplied as they may seem to be, they are, in truth, arguments to recommend the laying a proposition before the Irish nation so beneficial, that I cannot doubt but a people of great abilities and capable of discernment, will, when the heat of their alarm has subsided, no longer refuse to take into consideration a plan which may be highly advantageous to every part of the empire; and unless the measure had been ill understood, the unreasonable refusal to listen to any proposition, could not have taken place.

In voting for the resolutions, I do not mean to approve more than the *principle* of Union, to which no adequate objection has been stated. If we should hereafter proceed to details, it will be then necessary to give all our attention, and exert our best powers in examining the articles—and above all, in preventing harm to the Constitution,
taking

taking care that we do not, with a levity and submission that seem to belong to the times, do any thing that may be unnecessary for one country, and should be highly dreaded by the other.

There has now been an opportunity of some experience, which is to be hoped will promote the utmost liberality and candour in proposing the measure, whenever the people of Ireland are found to be disposed to accept it. Every man will agree with me in deprecating all idea of force or threats, or the use of any means that are not perfectly fair and honourable.

To render Union satisfactory and permanent, it will not be sufficient that it be merely acceded to by Parliament. The people at large must be reconciled to it; and that they may, is the wish nearest my heart. It is for Ireland that I am most interested on this occasion. Her deplorable condition demands it; for I am most seriously convinced the measure is *absolutely necessary for her tranquillity, security, and welfare*. The bad effects of two separate Parliaments within one empire, and the baneful idea of separation, can be done away only by an Union; and until that event takes place, Ireland will never be settled, will always be disturbed by the most mischievous speculations and intrigues, the sport of parties, and of the enemies of England; she will be a weakness as she is at present, instead of a strength to the empire.

Mr. D O B B S's

S P E E C H

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OF

I R E L A N D,

ON TUESDAY THE 5th, OF MARCH, 1799;

ON SUBMITTING

FIVE PROPOSITIONS

FOR

TRANQUILLIZING THE COUNTRY.

—D U B L I N:—

PRINTED BY J. MOORE, 45, COLLEGE GREEN,

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S P E E C H, &c.

S I R,

WHEN I gave notice of the business of this day, I declared I would fully unbofom myself to this house, and I am come prepared to keep my word. The situation of Ireland calls aloud on every honest man to explicitly avow his sentiments, the heart that feels not for our past calamities, and that is not anxious to avert those that are impending, deserves to beat no more: and the tongue that dares pronounce what is contrary to the conviction of the mind, ought to be silenced for ever. With these feelings—with these sensations—I have this day entered these walls; and I trust I have left every passion, every prejudice, and every selfish idea behind me.

Sir, I have before declared, that I would move nothing that I conceived inimical to British connexion—to our present form of government—or to the safety of the Protestants of Ireland. British connexion has ever been dear to me for a variety of reasons. It is dear to me because I am sprung from British ancestors; it is dear to me from a similarity of language, laws, and manners; it is dear to me because the mutual interests of both require it should exist; it is dear to me because the British nation stands among the first that have ever appeared in the world. Nothing can make me wish to break off the connexion but British

A 2 tyranny;

tyranny; let Great Britain and Ireland be for ever connected, but not at the expence of Irish independence. Sir, I love the constitution of King, Lords and Commons as fixed under William the 3d. at the glorious revolution of 1688 : because for a century from that æra, England enjoyed more happiness and prosperity, than any other nation ancient or modern. I do not prefer that constitution from prejudice, but from reasoning; and as far as I have been able to find from the page of history, it seems to me to be the best result of human wisdom, and its operation the happiest in all political practice. Great abuses have indeed crept in, but I would not for that reason overthrow the constitution, tho' I would do those abuses away. Sir, I am attached to the Protestants, because I am descended from Protestants—because every near relative I have are Protestants—but I am not only attached to the Protestant, but also to the Catholic, and every sect of christianity. And now, Sir, that christianity is attacked on all sides by infidelity, it behoves every man who is a christian, no matter of what denomination, to rally round the standard of the Messiah. This, Sir, is necessary to defeat the propagation of French principles, which threaten to reduce Europe again to the miserable system of Pagan and Heathen philosophy, which threaten to reduce Europe again to those miserable doubts, which the wisest men of antiquity felt as to future rewards and punishments, and as to the immortality of the soul. Cato, the best and wisest of the Romans, could only say “ Plato thou reasonest well,” but with the christian it is not reasoning, but certainty. He has a fixed and steady principle of life and action, the most conducive to individual and general happiness; therefore whilst we attend to the Protestants, let us also embrace our Catholic brethren, and unite us all in christian love and benevolence. I have thus explicitly
given

given my reasons for loving the British connexion—the present form of government, and why I will never endanger the Protestants; but how are we to preserve this British connexion—how are we to preserve the constitution—and how are we to secure the Protestants? I will tell you Sir; it is by wise and wholesome laws, that will make the great mass of the People love and respect their government; this is the way to tranquillize Ireland, and this is yet within our power. This will do more to restore Ireland to peace and happiness than one hundred martial laws, and one hundred thousand executions; till such salutary measures are adopted, I, for one, must consider Ireland as a vast slaughter-house, in which 40,000 men of different descriptions, already lie dead, and in which some hundred thousands are devoted to future immolation. I shall perhaps be told of the deep criminality of most of those who are gone, and of most of those who are yet doomed to perish. Sir, I stand not here the advocate of Rebellion, or of guilt; but I beseech the members of this House to take care that they themselves are innocent. If the discontents and rebellion have arisen from an unwise or wicked system of Government, I do not hesitate to say, that all the property that has been destroyed, whether of the Rebel or the Loyalist, lies at the door of the Legislature. If an unwise and wicked system of Government has prevailed, I do not hesitate to say, that every drop of blood that has been shed, whether of the Rebel, or the Loyalist, lies at the door of the Legislature. Now, Sir, can any man doubt, whether this country has been governed unwisely or wickedly? Were I a stranger to this land, and had the reports of the two secret Committees of the last session put into my hands, I would ask no other evidence of injudicious Government. What do we find there? a conspiracy of near 300,000 fighting

men in three Provinces, in military organization, and sworn to overthrow the Constitution. It is now well known, that Connaught was as deeply engaged in the conspiracy, tho' not then so forward. Can any evidence be stronger of bad Government, than 400,000 men able to bear arms out of a population of four millions, or four millions and a half, should solemnly bind themselves to overthrow it. But, Sir, we have it from the first authority, that our Legislature has been corrupt and abominable. We have it from the British Minister, and we have it from the Castle Pamphleteer. Can any man doubt, that we ought to rescue ourselves from this degraded situation? Can any man doubt that we ought to shew the British minister, that this House, is worthy of the confidence of the Irish Nation. Can any man doubt but that we ought to enquire as to every abuse, and every grievance, and do them away. Sir, I call on the House of Commons of Ireland, to awake from its slumber, and work while it is day. I call on the House of Commons of Ireland to awake, and not wait to be aroused by the crash of the Constitution. I call on the House of Commons of Ireland to awake, and contemplate the mighty scenes that are passing around them. Do you believe the present convulsions of civilized Europe, are owing to the mere machinations of men? No, it is the hand of God visiting the bad Governments of the world. France is permitted to be a scourge to herself, and to others, because her Government was tyrannic and corrupt, and because her Nobles, her Gentry and her dignified Clergy disgraced and abused their elevated situations. What was it destroyed Holland? That base love of money, which made every man of consequence consider himself, and abolished all their former love of virtue and of freedom? What was it destroyed the different Italian states but their tyranny and their vices? What is it, that is paving the

way, to revolutionize Spain and Portugal, but their pernicious systems of Government. I say again to the Irish House of Commons awake, and remove every thing that is justly obnoxious, or you perish : and I call upon the Nobles, the Gentry, and the Clergy to avert their own ruin by the practice of every public, and of every private virtue.

Sir, there are but two lines of conduct for us to pursue : the one is a system of conciliation, with a strong executive power to give time for wholesome laws, and wholesome measures to operate. The other is force alone. If the former be pursued, I would answer with my life, that the termination will be happy. If the latter, I know not the consequence. Your military are made up of different descriptions : can we answer for the steadiness of all ? Have we calculated, what might be the consequence of a powerful descent from France ? But I will suppose the military steady, the French baffled, and the Rebels defeated ; the bayonet will not alter the human mind, and you must go into a war of extermination : and if you do, is it not inevitable ruin ; what would remain after the conflict, an Island inhabited by old men, women and children ; an Island with its houses destroyed, and its fields desolated ; an Island with the remnant of its gentry and its People involved in one common beggary ; an Island, more gifted from nature, than perhaps any other spot on the habitable globe, exhibiting an awful monument of the consequences of sanguinary injustice, of national distraction, and of national folly.

Sir, before I go into the specific system, that in my opinion would tranquillize Ireland, I think it necessary to declare, that I give up for the present all idea of external Parliamentary reform Parliamentary reform has been an object dear to me from the first moment I ever thought of Politics, and in happier times would be again my object.

But

But from the peculiar situation of Ireland, one fourth of her inhabitants only being Protestants, and the rest Catholics, I see its impracticability, till the Protestants almost individually feel that a prudent reform might be made consistent with their security; having thus given up external reform for the present, the internal becomes the more necessary. I have no objection to the fair patronage of the crown, in disposing of the military and naval appointments; I have no objection to the fair patronage of the crown in disposing of the dignities of the church, and of every necessary office in the state; and this is a sufficient patronage for every wholesome purpose. But, Sir, I am the avowed enemy to that extent of patronage, that enables the minister to corrupt the Legislature. I shall not say a word, Sir, of the present house of commons, for that I know would be unparliamentary; but I may declare with Mr. Pitt, and the Castle Pamphlet, that Great Britain has governed Ireland prior to the election of the present house of Commons, by corrupting our Parliament: In order therefore, to take away at least, a part of the means of corrupting it in future, one of the resolutions, I shall presently propose to you will be, that it is the opinion of this house that all sinecure places should be abolished, compensation being made to their present possessors.

Sir, I have said that the abolition of sinecure places, would in part take away the means of corruption, but that alone will not be sufficient; from the moment Ireland obtained her independence in 1782, the English ministry resolved, and it is now openly and barefacedly acknowledged, to govern Ireland as they pleased through the medium of corruption; in pursuance of this plan, several new places have been created since that period; it might perhaps be the best way to abolish them also, but as that might lead to an argument as to their utility, I shall only submit a resolution to the house, that it is the opinion

of

of this house, that no man should in future sit in it, who holds any office created since the year 1782.

I shall now call the attention of the house to what remains to be given to the Catholics; their Peers are at present precluded from sitting in Parliament, because their consciences will not permit them to take the oath prescribed by law; for the same reason none can become members of this house: and there are certain offices in the state, from which they are precluded by act of Parliament. It will I am sure be admitted that nothing but the most absolute necessity can warrant any man to inflict restriction or penalty on another on account of religion; now is there any man in this house who, on serious reflection, will get up and say, there could be danger to the Protestants, or to the state, whilst parliament remains constituted as it is, by giving what is now withheld from the Catholics: let us suppose these restrictions done away; what is to follow,--eight or ten Catholic Peers would take their places in the house of Lords, which now consists of about 180, including the Bishops; how are the number of Catholic Peers to be increased? only by new creations made by a Protestant King: and is there any man who will suppose that a Protestant King will ever make such a creation of Catholic Peers, as will give them a preponderancy in the upper house of Parliament? In regard to this house, what is the fact; who sends the county members? the landlords of Ireland? who are the landlords of Ireland? Protestants, with a few exceptions. In whose hands are the boroughs? entirely in the hands of Protestants, two or three cities, and a few towns, may perhaps be nearly divided, or perhaps the ballance of property may be in favour of the Catholics; but can any rational man have a serious alarm of any preponderance of Catholics in the Irish house of Commons, in the way members are now returned? I am persuaded, there is no ra-

tional man has such an idea : some Catholics of property would no doubt, find their way here ; and I for one, shall be most heartily glad to see them. Let us next enquire if any mischief could arise from their being allowed to fill the places from which they are at present precluded ; who appoints to these places ? the king. Will any man seriously say, he is afraid of the safety of the state if we should allow Catholics to occupy the higher offices ? Will any man suppose that a Protestant King will ever appoint a Catholic to one of them, unless he be distinguished for his knowledge, his abilities, and his virtues ? and if he be so distinguished, on what principle should he be prevented ? Sir, I should be glad to see the King raising men of such a description, no matter of what sect, to the highest offices ; I should be glad to see the King raising Catholics of integrity and sufficient property to the Peerage : I wish for every thing that will blend the inhabitants of Ireland into one people : whilst enmity remains between the Protestants and Catholics, Ireland can never be a great, a happy, or a prosperous nation. And therefore, Sir, the third resolution I shall submit to the house will be this ; that it is the opinion of this house, that full Catholic Emancipation may be safely given, provided the present mode of returning members to the house of Commons shall continue, till time shall evince to every thinking Protestant, that they will have nothing to fear from a prudent reform in Parliament.

Sir, the next thing I shall call the attention of the house to, is tithes ; a subject on which men's minds are more agreed than perhaps on any other : almost every man in the nation is against the payment of tithes unless it be the established clergy, the tithe Proctors, and some of the landed gentlemen, who pay next to nothing, because the clergy find it necessary to have their aid to enable them to collect from their peasantry : from the earliest period of my recollection

recollection, tithes have been the subject of general discontent; they chiefly gave birth to the white boys of the south, and the hearts of oak, and hearts of steel of the north: ask the quaker what he thinks of tithes? he tells you, he cannot pay them, because he thinks it contrary to christianity, and many of them have evinced their sincerity, by even going to jail; ask those who are of the established religion of the country, what they think of them; and you will be answered almost to a man, that they feel it unjust, that they should expend all that is done in improvement, and that he who expends nothing is entitled to a tenth of the benefit: ask of the Catholics and the different dissenters, they will give you the same reason of those of the establishment, but with this strong additional one, that it is unjust that they should be compelled to pay a clergyman they never hear, whom they do not acknowledge, and from whom they can receive no possible benefit. Sir, I happen to be of the established religion, but if I were not, I say I would feel the payment of two clergy a grievance. There are certain things that every man, in certain situations must feel to be grievances, and that Government is highly culpable, and highly unwise, that does not do them away. Sir, I am not adverse to a fair and liberal payment of the Clergy, but I want it by a mode that will make the teacher, and those who are able to be taught, in friendship with one another. If the Devil had been consulted how the Clergy should be rendered useless, I think it was by paying them with tithes. But if tithes were even the best mode that could have been adopted, the universal dislike of them should induce a wise Legislature to alter them. A wise Legislature will for ever consult the temper, and wishes of the People it has to govern, and as far as it is possible, will gratify those wishes. But it will be asked what is to be substituted? It is not necessary to go into

detail, as that will belong to the House in Committee; but if we agree to the principle, there can be no doubt, that means can be found, to carry the resolution into effect. I will just suppose for a moment, that tithes should be changed into a rent, to which the lands should be for ever liable, subject to rise and fall at the end of 21 years, or some other period to be fixed on, according to the then average price of grain. This I am told is the way certain leases are made by some of the English colleges, and might be perhaps usefully adopted here. But, Sir I again say that will be the business of the committee, and I shall therefore only add at present, that the 4th resolution I wish the House to come to is.—That it is the opinion of this House that tithes should be abolished, and some other mode of paying the established clergy be substituted in their stead.

Sir, the clergy who are not paid by tithe have peculiar influence on their congregations; I mean those of the Dissenters and Catholics, and it would well become the wisdom of Government to make such a liberal provision for them, as would give them a deep interest in the prosperity of the state. The consequence would be that in every corner of the Kingdom, the Legislature would have able men, inculcating the necessity of subordination and obedience to the laws. It must strike every gentleman who hears me, that the clergy from their situation and universality over the country, can be either the great means of fomenting or putting down Rebellion. I may be asked here, but how is the expence to be borne? I answer, that the expence would in a few months be found œconomy: for their influence, accompanied with the effects of the other resolutions, would soon render 100,000 men of our present military establishment unnecessary. The last resolution I shall therefore propose is.—That it is the opinion of this House that a liberal provision should be made

made for the secular Catholic clergy of this Kingdom; and also for the ministers of the different dissenting congregations now existing in Ireland.

Sir, I should hope the Irish minister and those around him, would support every one of these resolutions; but at all events I cannot suppose they will oppose the two last, because it has been held out both by Mr. Pitt and the castle pamphleteer, that an abolition of tithes, and a provision for the dissenting and Catholic clergy, should accompany an Union. Will the Irish minister say to the People of Ireland, there are good measures with an Union, but totally inadmissible if they retain their independence? Will the Irish minister openly avow, these good things shall not be given you unless you accept a Legislative Union? And if he will not, I shall be glad to hear, what he has to offer against the principle of all or any of these regulations.

Sir, I have now fully given to this House the system that I would adopt, to restore order to this distracted nation; let me now point out, what I am satisfied would be the consequence. It may perhaps, be said with truth, as to three provinces of Ireland, that the great majority of the People know nothing of Parliamentary reform, and that they never annexed to it any specific advantage; but it is not so: as to the Province of Ulster, which is the great stamina of this land, the great mass of the People of that Province are perhaps as sagacious, and as well informed a Peasantry and Yeomanry as any in the King's dominions. They did annex to Parliamentary reform the abolition of useless places, the prevention of corruption, and the improper interference of Great Britain; they did annex to Parliamentary reform, the consequences of an honest, uncorrupt house of Commons. From the situation of the times, I am however persuaded, they would be contented with

with an internal reform of Parliament, followed up by those wholesome laws and regulations, which I have just now proposed. I will venture to say the same of the middling orders in the other three provinces: they will see it is the best that can be done, under the present existing order of things: the clergy of the establishment will of course be the friends of Government, and the other orders of Clergy would I am persuaded be perfectly satisfied. As to the very lowest class of people, they would feel happy in being relieved from Tithe and the payment of two Clergy, the only evils they peculiarly feel. Thus, Sir, I would sweep the whole mass of the People into the bosom of the State; and thus would we be enabled to bid defiance to every foreign and domestic foe. I do not say there would not still remain men whose turbulent spirits, and whose ambitious views would endeavour to overthrow the Constitution; but where would be their armies—where would be their supporters? if they went to the lower orders of the three Provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, and talked to them of grievances, what would be their answer? It would be, we no longer pay tithe—we no longer pay two Clergy, and we are sick of the horrors of civil war. If they go to Ulster, they would receive for answer, we pay no Tithe, we pay but one Clergyman, and we have got by an internal reform in Parliament, wise laws and wholesome regulations: we therefore love, and we will support the Government. Such also would be the opinions of all the middle orders of men throughout the kingdom; what would be the answer of the Catholic and dissenting Clergy to such agitators? they would say, we are comfortably provided for, and we know there is no change you can bring about, that would better the clerical order; we have seen what has happened to the Clergy by revolutions in other countries, and we will oppose

pose every attempt to overthrow the Constitution of Ireland. Sir, let us pass these resolutions, and follow them up by necessary laws, and every man inclined to rebellion must abandon his purpose or abandon this land.

Let us now consider how these resolutions would operate, as to enabling us effectually to resist a legislative Union. The Irish House of Commons has voted it will have no possible Union: the English Minister in the face of that declaration passes every specific resolution relative to the Union in the British House of Commons, which he follows by a conference with the Lords, who are now considering the same resolutions; and it is declared, that all this is to end in an address to the King to lay them before the Irish Parliament; what does the Irish Minister say, that it is a measure that will never be lost sight of: can any man doubt but with the means in the power of the minister, a majority of one may be obtained in this house; can any man doubt after such a conduct, and such declarations, that they will carry the measure if they can: can any man doubt, if the people are supine, that with the laws now in force, and the military power in the country, that a Legislative Union may be carried; how then are we to stem it? by making the people love and respect this House: by making the people so attached to their own Legislature, that the British minister must feel, that tho' he could carry and enforce Legislative Union for a moment, it would ultimately end in separation: I therefore call on every man to whom a Legislative Union is odious, to support the resolutions I shall propose to you.

Sir, all are agreed that Ireland is in the most critical situation; let then every man feel, that he at least has done his duty; let every man pause, before he tells the people, that their Legislature if it is to continue, must continue under

der a system of corruption; let every man pause before he tells the Catholics, they have nothing to hope from an Irish house of Commons; let every man pause before he tells the people, he will not abolish tithes, tho' England is ready to do so, if a Legislative Union be accepted; let every man pause before he says to the Catholic and dissenting clergy, I will make no provision for you, tho' England will do so, if you adopt a Legislative Union.

Sir, I have not been anxious to obtrude myself on the house, but have waited from day to day, in the hope that some person of more consequence would have offered a system of conciliation; I would have been particularly happy, if such a system had come from the noble Lord on the Treasury bench, because it would then have been peculiarly healing. But finding no man on any side of the House ready to do, what appears to me indispensable to the national safety, I should have felt myself a guilty man, had I remained silent. I have now unburdened my mind, whatever may be the consequence. If these resolutions be rejected, I shall sincerely wish that those measures which may be thought wiser, may answer their purpose. If Irish prosperity and happiness be produced by them, it will be to me, a subject of joy: If on the other hand they create new misfortunes, whilst I lament them, I shall have the consolation, of having done all in the power of an humble individual to avert them. As to myself, I have secured that I shall sleep in peace if I am permitted to live, and if death should be my portion, I trust I shall meet it with fortitude and serenity.

S U B S T A N C E

O F T H E

S P E E C H

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T H E R I G H T H O N O U R A B L E

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S U B S T A N C E
OF THE
S P E E C H
OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY ADDINGTON,

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE 12TH OF FEBRUARY, 1799,

IN

THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE,

TO WHOM

HIS MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS MESSAGE

OF THE 22D JANUARY,

RELATIVE TO IRELAND,

WAS REFERRED.

—D U B L I N:—

PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN, 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

1799.

SUBSTANCE
OF THE
SPEECH,
&c. &c.

Mr. DOUGLAS in the Chair:

THE Motion was—"That, in order to promote
" and secure the essential interests of Great Britain
" and Ireland, and to consolidate the strength,
" power, and resources of the British Empire,
" it will be advisable to concur in such measures
" as may best tend to unite the two Kingdoms
" of Great Britain and Ireland into one Kingdom,
" in such manner, and on such terms and con-
" ditions, as may be established by Acts of
" the respective Parliaments of his Majesty's said
" Kingdoms."

The SPEAKER said,

THE occasions were few on which he was disposed to take any other part in the debates and proceedings of the House, than that which was called for by his official duty; on the present important question, however, he thought it incumbent upon him to express his opinion by his vote; and, exhausted as the subject had been, he hoped for the indulgence of the Committee, whilst he stated the grounds upon which that vote would be given.

His

His view of the subject was, indeed, very different from that of his Honourable Friend (Mr. Banks) who had declared it to be his opinion, that the situation of Ireland was such, as to render it not only inexpedient, but unsafe, to coalesce with her. Now it was upon the situation of that country, at the present moment, that he founded his conviction, not merely of the expediency, for of that he had long been satisfied, but of the urgent and pressing necessity of the measure in question; which, though considered by his Honourable Friend as in no degree tending to remedy those evils, which were universally acknowledged, he was convinced would, in the first instance, palliate, and ultimately eradicate them; would at once have the effect of allaying irritation and animosity, and ere long, he trusted, of extinguishing them for ever.

His Honourable Friend was also disposed to think, that the Legislature of Ireland was fully adequate to the redress of those grievances which require parliamentary interposition, and to the restoration of internal tranquillity. This supposition unfortunately was not warranted by experience: to the redress of some of the grievances complained of, and to the removal of some of the causes of irritation, the Speaker said its adequacy could not be doubted; but there were radical and inherent evils, closely interwoven with the state and condition of Ireland, and with the temper, the feelings, and the prejudices of the great body of the people, which, though they were not occasioned by the separation of the two Legislatures, he was convinced an incorporation of those Legislatures could alone effectually remove.

It

It was a melancholy, but, he feared, an incontrovertible truth, that the state of Ireland had, at no period of its history, with which we are acquainted, been such as to afford satisfaction to any mind, that could justly appreciate the blessings of a well-ordered, a flourishing, and a happy condition of civil society. The bounty of Providence had, indeed, been displayed in that country by a fertile soil, and by abundant means of internal improvement and prosperity; its inhabitants had not been less distinguished than those of Great Britain, in corresponding stations of life, for eloquence, for literary and scientific acquirements, and for those talents and exertions, which have established the naval and military renown of the British empire. Their form of government was the same as our own, but it wanted its true characteristics; it did not, like ours, bestow and receive general confidence and protection: for it was not, like ours, connected by ties, which he trusted were here indissoluble, with the obvious interests, the feelings and the sentiments of the great body of the people.

The truth was, that, in contemplating the state of Ireland, even at a period of apparent tranquillity, it was impossible not to discover those seeds of animosity, which have unhappily been matured by circumstances into insurrection and rebellion. To account, in a great degree, for this animosity, it might, perhaps, be sufficient to state, that a large majority of the people were Catholics, and that four-fifths of the property was in the hands of Protestants, who are alone legally competent to hold the high offices of state, and to perform the functions of legislation. Hereditary feelings and resentments had, besides, contributed

tributed to keep these elements of internal discord in almost constant agitation. The extensive confiscations which took place at the commencement of the last century, when, after the suppression of the rebellion by Lord Mountjoy, almost the whole province of Ulster became forfeited to the Crown; the creation of numerous boroughs by James the First; which in effect transferred the legislative authority from the Catholics to the Protestants; the Act of Settlement, and explanation; the severities exercised by Cromwell; the event of the battle of the Boyne, and the surrender of Limerick (though the articles of capitulation in the latter instance prove, what was indeed manifested by the whole tenour of his conduct, that a spirit of intolerance and persecution made no part of the character of King William;) the code of Popery Laws, which, however necessary for the security of persons of one persuasion, must be admitted to have operated with great severity on those of the other: all these circumstances could not fail to recur forcibly to the minds of the Catholics, to keep alive the sensations which they successively excited, and to make them look with irritation at power, when they saw it lodged in the hands of those whom they considered as their oppressors; whose religious opinions they conceived to be heretical, and who were in possession of that property which the Catholics supposed had been unjustly wrested from their ancestors.

On the other hand, the horrible excesses to which the vindictive fury and bigotry of the Catholics were carried in 1641; the dreadful use they made of the power, which they acquired upon the usurpation of James the Second (for the government of James the
Second

Second in Ireland was an usurpation after he had abdicated the throne of England); the forfeitures, the sequestrations, and the attainders, which then took place, had necessarily engendered those sentiments of apprehension and distrust in the Protestants of that country, which occasioned, and appeared to justify, the code of penalties and disabilities which was enacted at the commencement of the present century.

Such, he feared, was a true representation of the state and temper of Ireland; and he was convinced that no remedy could be effectual, but such as would strike at the root of the evil, would abate the struggles for power, would remove the impediments to civilization and internal improvement, and by which the Protestant and Catholic inhabitants of the two countries would become one people, under the superintending authority and protection of an united and imperial Parliament.

The Speaker then stated that about the year 1778, a material change of system took place: the extinction of the hopes of the House of Stuart, and the peaceable demeanour of the Roman Catholics, led to a repeal of the penal code, which bore upon them with peculiar hardship; and they obtained from the justice of the Irish Parliament full security to their property, complete personal liberty, and a perfect toleration of their religion. A wise and liberal policy induced the Legislature of this country to relax, at the same period, the strictness of the Act of Navigation, and of our colonial system: and an unqualified participation of the foreign trade of Great Britain was accordingly given to his Majesty's subjects in Ireland.

Further concessions, of a political nature, were made in the year 1782. The controul of the Privy Council, under what was called Poyning's Law, was abolished; and the act of the sixth of George the First, affirming the power and authority of the King, by and with the consent of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, to make laws and statutes to bind the kingdom and people of Ireland, was repealed. The independence of the Parliament of Ireland was thus fully and completely established; and, in the subsequent year, the appellant jurisdiction of the British House of Peers from the Courts of Law in that country was done away. Without calling in question the wisdom or expediency of the measures last described, it would not, he trusted, be thought disrespectful or improper to observe, for the observation was warranted by a Resolution of that House, that, however sufficient they might be for the removal of the grievances of which Ireland then complained, they were defective, and incomplete for the purpose of adjusting the relation in which the two countries were thenceforward to stand, as branches of the same empire; that they loosened the ancient ties of connection, and that they substituted no others in their place.

Such a state of things might possibly have subsisted for a time, during a period of tranquillity; but it was ill suited to bear the agitation of that tempest, which soon convulsed a considerable part of Europe, and extended its malignant and desolating principles to the sister kingdom. For its influence and its ravages it there unfortunately found an ample field: there were wanting in that country (as he had before stated), those links by which the body of the people should

should be connected with the Government: there were not, in the degree at least that could be wished, those ties between the higher and the great mass of the lower orders of the community, which are, perhaps, the best security for internal peace and tranquillity. In many parts of the country the non-residence of proprietors, and the intervention of other persons and other interests, obstructed that communication and intercourse between landlord and tenant which were equally advantageous to both, and to the country at large. The predominance of numbers, as had been already mentioned, was on the part of the Catholics, that of property on the part of the Protestants. The new philosophy had taught the dreadful lesson that was to be derived from such a disproportion: religious bigotry, for the first time, came in aid of principles always formidable, and aggravated the danger arising from the physical strength of numbers, and the new doctrines of the Rights of Man.

With the particulars of the convulsion that had recently taken place, all were too well acquainted. He would not now enter into them, but confine himself to a consideration of the various plans which had been proposed for restoring tranquillity to Ireland, and for perpetuating her connection with Great Britain. Of these, Catholic Emancipation, as it is called; the re-enactment of the Popery laws, in the whole or in part; and an incorporation of the Legislature of the two countries, had each its separate advocates.

The objections to Catholic Emancipation, coupled as it was, according to the general opinion of its advocates, with Parliamentary Reform, were, in the lan-

guage of Mr. Foster, whose name he could not mention but with sentiments of respect, " that it had the
 " tendency to give the influence to numbers, and to
 " take it from property, and to overwhelm the rights
 " of the Protestants of Ireland."

The Speaker acknowledged, that he was anxious for the removal of the most obnoxious grounds of complaint against what was termed the Protestant Ascendancy; but he sought for the attainment of this desirable object, by no other means than those of a Legislative Union; and not at the hazard of those formidable consequences, which Catholic Emancipation, with all that belonged to it, was, in his opinion, calculated to produce. Indeed, if the Catholics were true to their conscience and their creed, the Protestant establishment must be exposed by such a change to immediate, and, perhaps, inevitable danger; and the state of the Protestants under such circumstances, be rendered worse than that of the Catholics during any period of the present and preceding century. If actuated by interest and passion (by which he did not suppose that they were likely to be more or less influenced than others), they could not be supposed to possess, without exercising it, the power of recovering that property on which they conceived their ancestors to have been wrongfully deprived; and if, under the present circumstances, the inconveniences arising from the discordant proceedings of distinct Legislatures have been regarded with anxiety and apprehension, he could not but conceive such sensations would be applicable, in a far stronger degree, if political power was possessed by those, between whom, and the Parliament
 of

of Great Britain, a greater variety of differences from various causes, might be supposed to arise, and on points less capable of reconciliation and adjustment.

His Honourable Friend who spoke last, he observed, thought that it would be expedient for the Parliament of Ireland, to tread back some of the steps that had been taken, and to re-enact the whole code of the Popery laws (the repeal of which had been the subject of such general encomium and satisfaction) against the Catholics, who did not produce certificates of their peaceable and loyal conduct during the late rebellion; and to provide that those by whom such certificates were produced, should be admitted to all the rights and privileges enjoyed by Protestants; but he had also intimated such an opinion of the Catholics, as to leave little hope that many of them would be entitled to the benefit of such a distinction.

That disaffection had spread widely amongst that body, could not, he feared, be contested; that it had been so nearly universal, as some persons had imagined, he thought there were solid grounds to deny. Many individuals of the yeomanry and other volunteer corps, and most of those of whom the militia regiments consisted, were of that persuasion; and yet they had in general manifested the utmost degree of ardour and alacrity in resisting the internal, as well as the foreign enemies of their country. He was, however, concerned to think that, on the part of a large proportion of the Catholics, strong prejudices against this country must be confessed to exist; but he was convinced that they arose, in a great degree, from the persuasion that the Protestant ascendancy was

was principally maintained by British connection, and British power.

He said that the proceeding which had been recommended by his Honourable Friend, would, if his advice was followed, appear to imply that the rebellion had been carried on by Catholics only; a supposition which the accounts received from the seat of it, and the characters and confessions of many of the United Irishmen, would effectually disprove. The proposed discrimination would, he was persuaded, if adopted, add fuel to the flame, and create new sources of dissension and hostility. It should besides be observed, that many who, from motives of hypocrisy, or of regard to their personal safety, had not given way to the malignant suggestions of their own minds, by taking up arms against the Government, would thereby be countenanced; whereas, in other parts, that had been the scene of insurrection and rebellion, the Catholic, who had yielded to a momentary, though an unjustifiable impulse, would, by one rash step, be excluded for ever. This was not a mode, according to his opinion, of healing the divisions, and of establishing the tranquillity of Ireland: it could not have the effect of allaying the irritation of the Catholics, nor of conveying to the Protestants a greater degree of confidence and security.

The Speaker then adverted to the measure of 1793, by which the competency to enjoy and exercise the elective franchise, and to hold certain offices, was afforded to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and to the opinion which had been stated concerning it, from an authority to which he had before referred. "For
" that measure," Mr. Foster had said, " that he
" could

“ could not thank the Irish Minister, though he did
 “ for many others ; for that from his soul he confi-
 “ dered it as the prelude and forerunner of the
 “ overthrow of the Protestant establishment in Ire-
 “ land ;”—“ that it hazarded the Hanover succession
 “ and the connection with Great Britain.”

From these opinions he was far from dissenting ; he had quoted them, not only to mark the danger which was apprehended from the proceedings of 1793, by a Gentleman known to be friendly to the Protestant establishment, and to the connection with Great Britain, but for the purpose of founding upon them an argument in favour of the measure in question. If the predictions of Mr. Foster were well founded, and he confessed that they accorded in a great degree with his own sentiments and apprehensions, he saw no means by which their accomplishment could possibly be averted, but by a legislative Union, or by a renewal of the restrictions and disabilities which were done away by the Act of 1793. Of the former measure Mr. Foster had very recently disapproved, and it could not therefore but be supposed that it was by the latter only, that he could hope to prevent those calamities, which, he was convinced, were deprecated by no one more anxiously and sincerely, than by that Honourable Gentleman himself.

He would, however, acknowledge that if he were obliged to make an option between a recurrence to so much of the system of the Popery laws as was repealed at that time, or to Catholic Emancipation, coupled with Parliamentary Reform, he should conceive that he best consulted the tranquillity of Ireland, and the interests of the empire at large, in giving the preference

ference to the former: but that it was, in a great measure, because his objections to both were radical and insuperable, that he was compelled to give his cordial and entire support to the measure of a legislative Union.

He said, it was a satisfaction to him to know that the opinion which he entertained on this subject was sanctioned by great and respectable authorities. It could not be unimportant to the weight and credit of such a measure, to state that it had been countenanced by distinguished and enlightened men in the last century; that it had the approbation of Sir Matthew Decker, Sir William Petty, and Sir Josiah Child; that Molineux, the friend of Locke, who had incurred, as the Journals could testify, the displeasure of that House, for his bold assertion of the independent authority of the Parliament of his native country, anxiously wished for its adoption. After having referred in his publication on this subject, to many ancient documents, for the purpose of proving that at an early period of our history, delegates from Ireland had been sent to the Parliament of Great Britain, Mr. Molineux adds—"If from these records it be concluded that the Parliament of England may bind Ireland, it must also be allowed that the people of Ireland ought to have their representatives in the Parliament of England; and this I believe we should be willing enough to embrace, but it is an happiness we can hardly hope for."

It was also material to state, that in the second year of the reign of Queen Anne, when, as had been said, it had become difficult for the Protestants, to keep their ground in Ireland, a Committee of the House
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of Lords of that kingdom was appointed to take into consideration the state of the nation : and the Committee reported, " That upon due consideration of
 " the present constitution of this kingdom, such an
 " humble representation be made to the Queen of
 " the state and condition thereof, as may best incline
 " her Majesty, by such proper means as to her
 " Majesty shall seem fit, to promote such an Union
 " with England as may best qualify the states of this
 " kingdom to be represented there." The proposition was not listened to by the Queen's Ministers, and, as has been stated by Lord Clare, " it was not
 " till this attempt to unite the Parliaments of both
 " countries had proved abortive, that the great code
 " of the Popery laws of Ireland was enacted : a code," he admitted, " of great severity, but evidently
 " forced upon the Parliament by necessity."

To these authorities, and many others might be cited in support of them; he had the utmost satisfaction in adding those of Lord Clare, Lord Carleton, Lord Kilwarden, and particularly of Lord Yelverton, who had been called the " Father of the Independence
 " of the Irish Parliament," but whose sentiments at this time were by no means inconsistent with his conduct in 1782 ; as it was only by the establishment of the independence of the Parliament of Ireland, that a legislative Union could be the result of compact between the two countries. Without that measure it must have been an act of power on the part of Great Britain.

To the opinions of these great and enlightened men, who have proved themselves to be the true friends of Great Britain and Ireland, by their constant
 C endeavours

endeavours to encourage and promote a close and intimate connection between the two countries, he desired to add those entertained by Dr. M^cNevin and others, of that, which (with reference to their own views and projects) they justly denominated *a fatal* measure. It would be recollected, that these persons have declared, that, on their parts, Catholic Emancipation was a mere pretence, and that separation was the real and invariable object of all their hopes and all their efforts. On the 9th of April 1795, *the Committee of Nine*, of which Dr. M^cNevin, Lewins, Ryan, and others of the same description, were members, assembled at the Chapel in Francis-street, Dublin, and came to the following, amongst other resolutions :

“ Resolved unanimously, That we are sincerely and
 “ unalterably attached to the rights, liberties, and in-
 “ dependence of our native country, and we pledge
 “ ourselves, collectively and individually, to resist,
 “ even our own emancipation, if proposed to be con-
 “ ceded on the ignominious terms of acquiescence in
 “ the fatal measure of an Union with the sister kingdom.

“ Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this
 “ meeting be respectfully presented to our agent,
 “ Theobald Wolfe Tone, Esq. for the readiness with
 “ which he accompanied our deputies to England,
 “ and the many other important services he has ren-
 “ dered to the Catholic body, in pursuit of emanci-
 “ pation—services, which no gratitude can over-
 “ rate, and no remuneration can overpay.”

It was not, however, upon authority only, much as he was inclined to respect it, nor upon the repugnance of United Irishmen to this measure, that he was disposed to support and recommend it. He
 thought

thought that it was calculated to avert much probable evil from both countries, and to produce positive and substantial advantages to both.

One of the leading considerations in its favour was, that it would in future preclude the inconvenience and danger, of which recent experience warrants the apprehension, arising from the discordant determinations of separate and independent Legislatures. He reminded the Committee of the proceedings of the Irish Parliament, upon the subject of the Commercial Propositions in 1785, and the question of the appointment of a Regent, which occurred in 1788. In the former, the sensitive jealousy of the Parliament of Ireland deprived that country of the obvious and undisputed advantages which were held out to it, by a free access to the home market of Great Britain; in the latter, it would be recollected that the diversity of opinion, which occurred in the two Parliaments, led not only to a difference as to the extent of the power and authority, but as to the identity of the person, by whom, during the illness of his Majesty, the functions of executive government were to be exercised. The same illustrious Personage was indeed nominated by both, but by one as a matter of choice; in virtue of a supposed right by the other: in one with more limited powers; in the other with powers as unlimited as those of the Monarch himself. It was therefore obvious that the discordant principles, which operated at that juncture, and which actually occasioned the delegation of different degrees of authority, might also have led to the nomination of different individuals: and this at the hazard of the tranquillity and safety of the empire, and in direct violation

of the spirit of the unrepealed statute of Henry VIII. which enacts that " the kingdom of Ireland is inseparably annexed to, and dependent upon, the Crown of Great Britain, and that whoever is King of England is thereby *ipso facto* King of Ireland."

Upon every thinking mind a deep impression was made by these transactions; and a very respectable Gentleman, who now holds a high office in Ireland, is reported to have said, in a debate at that period, " If these sentiments are to prevail, what shall prevent us to-morrow from adopting a different Mutiny-bill, or disclaiming an uniformity in religion? The unity of the executive magistrate has been well called the solitary bond of union; but can it exist for a moment, if a possibility remains of the two Legislatures being discordant on this subject? Unless one is suffered to take the lead, the alternative is obvious: with two Legislatures so liable to pull different ways, no authority can govern."

His Honourable Friend, who preceded him, appeared, however, to be under little apprehension upon the subject of a possible difference of sentiments and conduct, in the two Legislatures. He thought that as the King of Great Britain was the supreme executive magistrate, and therefore vested with the same prerogatives in both countries, it was not to be supposed that those embarrassments and dangers would arise, which might be occasioned by a declared difference of opinion on the subject of treaties, or on the great questions of peace or war. The Speaker said, he knew and respected the prerogatives of the Crown, but he likewise knew and respected the privileges of the people. Of these the power of the purse

purse was the most important; it was the great instrument of support and controul; the check upon the abuse of power on the part of the advisers of the Crown, and the safeguard and guardian of the interest and liberties of the people. It would not be contended that this great privilege was to be borne down by prerogative; and if not, it might, at a period of public emergency, be differently exercised in both countries. In one, supplies might be liberally granted; in the other, absolutely withheld; and the co-operation of the two great branches of the empire could never be ensured, even on occasions in which its security and independence were deeply and essentially involved. The Speaker, however, declared, that his hopes went farther; he thought, that if the present measure was carried into effect, it would not only preclude such a discordance as he had described, but that it would lead to a coincidence of views and sentiments in the great body of the people of both kingdoms; that they would all look the same way; and that their feelings and opinions would invariably recognise the same interests, the same allies, and the same enemies.

He must however declare, that no consideration so forcibly impelled him to wish for the adoption of this measure, as his conviction of the beneficial consequences with which it would be attended to the internal situation of Ireland: his hope and belief were, that it would lead to the removal of a principal ground of animosity, by precluding the species of contest, which had hitherto subsisted for obtaining political authority and power.—Amongst the lower orders of society, he was convinced that its salutary effects would be found

found in that change of manners, the result of habitual industry, which would necessarily be produced by the transfer of a part of the capital of Great Britain to that country. Could it be supposed, he would ask, that persons of opulence would be so much inclined to embark any part of their property from hence in the trade and commerce of Ireland, if the Parliament of that country were still to remain distinct from, instead of being incorporated with that of Great Britain? Of the consequences which must be produced by such an application of part of the wealth of this country, no doubt could be entertained: it would operate on every class of the community, and diffuse itself throughout every part of that kingdom: and notwithstanding what had been said of the aggravation that would be occasioned by a legislative Union to the evil arising from the non-residence of the opulent proprietors of land in that country, he was convinced, that whatever had a tendency to give security to property and improvement to manners would prove the fallacy of such a supposition; and that even those wastes and fastnesses, which now afford retreat to the marauder, the assassin, and the rebel, would be the scenes of cheerful labour and protected industry, of mutual confidence and social intercourse, under the superintendence and guardianship of well administered and beneficent laws.

It had been said, that amongst the consequences of such a measure, it could not be contended that it would be possible to mention any immediate advantage to the Roman Catholics of Ireland: from this assertion, however, he must beg leave to dissent. The elective franchise itself, bestowed by the Parliament

liament of Ireland in 1793, could hardly be considered as a boon to the Roman Catholics, whom it was hoped and intended to gratify: the right, with the limitation annexed to it, could not be exercised in most instances, without some degree of violence to their opinions and their feelings: it could only be made use of for the purpose of contributing to form a House of Commons, the whole body of which they too generally conceived to be adverse to their interests, and those of the individuals, to whom, from a coincidence in religious opinions and from other causes, they had been accustomed to look up with the utmost respect: Whereas the same franchise, if employed in contributing to form the representation in an united Parliament, might be accompanied with the satisfactory reflection, that the individual in whose behalf it was exercised, would be mixed with those, a majority of whom were uninfluenced by the prejudices which they have imputed, whether on sufficient ground or otherwise is not now to be considered, to the Parliament and to the great body of the Protestants in Ireland.

With respect to the expediency of extending to the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, in the event of such a measure as was now in contemplation, a more ample participation of the rights of Protestant subjects, he would not now offer an opinion; he would however quote the sentiments of a person (Dr. Duigenan) whose good sense he admired, and who would not be accused of a strong bias towards the Roman Catholics of Ireland: " It has been
 " the opinion of very great and able statesmen, that
 " an union with England, on just and equitable
 " terms,

“ terms, would be very advantageous to Ireland, would
 “ contribute greatly to increase her trade and her
 “ opulence, and conduce to the strength of the em-
 “ pire at large : and in any event, it could not be
 “ more prejudicial to the Romanists of Ireland, than
 “ to any other class of his Majesty’s subjects here,
 “ but much less (if it could be at all prejudicial,
 “ which I cannot admit), in as much, if we were
 “ one people with the British nation, the prepon-
 “ derance of the Protestant body of the whole em-
 “ pire would be so great, that all rivalry and jea-
 “ lousies between Protestants and Romanists would
 “ cease or ever, and it would not be necessary, for
 “ the safety of the empire at large, to curb Romanists
 “ by any exclusive law whatsoever.”

On the supposed surrender of the rights of the
 Parliament of Ireland, and the sacrifice of its inde-
 pendency, he was not disposed to dwell ; the futility
 of the arguments on which those objections were
 founded, was, in his opinion at least, fully developed
 on a former occasion : he would only say, that if an
 uniform coincidence should take place between the
 two Legislatures, the independency of one or the
 other would be liable to be called in question ; and
 that without such a coincidence the interests of the
 empire, and eventually the connexion between the
 two countries, might possibly be endangered.

The Speaker said, he was not inclined to take up
 the time of the Committee by a reference to the
 particulars of the Union with Scotland, to the con-
 sequences which followed that measure, or to the
 arguments which they suggested on the present oc-
 casion. These topics had been already discussed, in
 a manner

a manner which could not fail to make a forcible impression on the House. He would only remark, that the animosity between the two nations, immediately previous to the Union, was such, as to have led them to the verge of hostilities; and that the grounds of distrust, and complaint, were thereby entirely done away. He also observed, that there were circumstances tending to facilitate an intimate connexion between this country and Ireland, and to incorporate the people of those kingdoms, which did not belong to the relation in which England and Scotland stood to each other. It would be recollected, amongst other illustrations of this observation, that here, and in Ireland, there was the same code of civil and criminal law; the same forms for the administration of justice; and for the purposes of legislation, the same succession to the crown; and the same established religion.

Having stated a few of the many considerations which, in his opinion, recommended this measure, he thought it incumbent upon him to notice some of the objections that had been made to it. Of these there were two, either of which, if valid, was fundamental and insuperable. The first was to the competency of the Parliament of Ireland to accede to this measure: the second relied on the final adjustment, as it had been termed, of the year 1782. The one called in question the nature and extent of the authority of the Parliament of Ireland; the other solemnly appealed to the good faith of the Parliament of Great Britain. In viewing the question of competency, he said, it appeared to him that new doctrines of the present day were on the one side,

and the sound principles, the theory and the practice of the British constitution, on the other. The highest legal authorities affirmed the extent and the supremacy of the power of Parliament. It was sufficient to refer to the names of Sir Edward Coke, Sir Matthew Hale, Sir William Blackstone, and many others, who, to say the least, have never been charged with a bias against the constitution and liberties of their country.

That the functions of the Legislature should be exercised on all occasions, and particularly on one so solemn and important as the present, with the utmost circumspection, would be readily and universally allowed. It must also be admitted, that Parliament possesses the power, and the right, when called for by the obligation of providing for the public security and welfare, to new-model the constitution, and to alter the succession to the Crown, and the established religion of these kingdoms; and he would then ask those to whose objections he was referring, where, if not in Parliament, the means of carrying into effect such an arrangement as that which is now in contemplation, however necessary, and however approved, could possibly be supposed to reside? Not in the constituent body, for it would hardly be said that they had delegated a trust to their representatives, with a reservation in particular cases: not in the people at large, for such a supposition would imply the dissolution of the Government; as it is an established truth, that, whilst the constitution exists, the only legitimate sanction of public opinion, and its only efficient authority, must be derived from the proceedings of Parliament. “ This is the
“ place,”

“ place,” Sir William Blackstone observes, “ where
 “ that transcendent and absolute power, which must
 “ in all governments reside somewhere, is entrusted
 “ by the constitution of these kingdoms.”

The attempts to preclude the discussion of the present subject, by the denomination of a Final Adjustment, which had been bestowed on the proceedings of the year 1782, struck him with more astonishment than even those which he had read and heard against the sufficiency of Parliament itself. If any importance were to be attached to those words, he should have expected to find them solemnly recorded in acts of the respective Legislatures, as the basis of the new relation which then took place between the two countries: what, however, was the fact? They are mentioned in a message from the King, and noticed in the addresses of the British Parliament, and of the House of Lords in Ireland; but in the address of the House of Commons of that country, these words are not to be found.

He observed, that as it had been the practice (and a judicious one it was, where there is a general concurrence of opinion), that the address should accord with the speech or the message from his Majesty, the omission was remarkable. All, however, that had been said upon this part of the subject, appeared to him to be a dispute about words; for he was ready to acknowledge, that the British Parliament would justly incur the imputation of a gross breach of faith, if they were to aim, either directly or indirectly, at the resumption of the power and supremacy which were then solemnly renounced: that the adjustment, as far as the independency of the Irish Parliament

was concerned, was really and absolutely final and conclusive; but if the argument, which was meant to be founded on these words, could be expected to avail, it must not only pass over the measure which took place in the subsequent year, and the resolution which immediately succeeded the act for the repeal of the 6th of Geo. I. but it must contend that the true import of those words was so binding and peremptory, as to bar the possibility of adopting any ulterior arrangement of the nature of that to which they might be supposed to apply, however called for by the obvious interests, and the wishes of the inhabitants of both countries. Such a proposition could not be maintained, and if not, the argument with which it was necessarily connected, must, in his opinion, fall to the ground.

The Speaker said that some objections had been urged, the force of which he would by no means deny. He was thoroughly convinced that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, was a true and faithful representative of the people of Great Britain; that their opinions and their wishes (he did not mean the fluctuating and fleeting impressions of the day, but those which were the result of information and reflection) had their due influence, and were there fully and accurately expressed. He could not, therefore, contemplate without anxiety, the possible effects of such an alteration as the measure in question would produce.

He was not, however, inclined to oppose a conjectural and contingent evil to that which was positive and immediate; or if he did, he must compare one, as cautiously as he could, with the other, and strike the

the balance. His apprehensions on this subject would be greater, were it not for the experience which has been afforded by the Union with Scotland; but the pressing evils, which it was the duty of the House, if possible, to avert, were uppermost in his mind; and he was convinced that every other remedy which had been suggested was fraught with consequences infinitely more injurious than any of those which even this circumstance, objectionable as he allowed it to be, was capable of producing.

Of the danger to the commercial interests of this country, which had been adverted to, but which had not been much insisted upon, he said he entertained no serious apprehension. It was not true that Great Britain would necessarily lose what Ireland would gain. He knew besides the liberality, and the good sense of the merchants and manufacturers of this country: if Ireland should cease to be a separate kingdom, they would not entertain a wish to withhold from her inhabitants a fair and equal participation of the advantages which were enjoyed by themselves; and they were fully aware that whatever contributed to promote industry and to produce tranquillity, in Ireland, had a tendency to give additional security and stability to the trading interests of Great Britain.

It had been asked, why, if this measure was brought forward with such obvious advantages, the adoption of it had not been sooner recommended? To which it had been justly and forcibly answered, that it should not be wondered at, if those, who are convinced that a close connexion between the two countries is essential to the welfare of both, should be particularly solicitous to strengthen and confirm it,
when

when the dissolution of that connexion is the avowed object of the intestine traitors in Ireland, and of the common enemy of the two kingdoms.

He was, however, concerned to think, and to acknowledge, that precautionary wisdom had very little influence on the conduct of individuals, or of nations; an evil must in general have been painfully experienced before measures are taken to remove it, or to guard against its return: the abuses of power led to that establishment of our rights, and that security to our liberties, which took place at the Revolution. The weight of the public debt was becoming, at least in the opinion of many, intolerable to the subjects of this country, before efficacious measures were adopted for its diminution; and it was not until public credit was seriously reduced, and the objections to the plan of raising the supplies of the year, by the ordinary practice of loans, became almost insuperable, that the system of the present session of Parliament was adopted; which, however burdensome, was a subject of general approbation, and a source of pride, of satisfaction, and of confidence to a great majority of the people.

To this want of promptitude to provide against remote and contingent evils, one exception indeed presented itself to his recollection: it was the measure adopted by the Parliament in 1791, which provided, that in case of future loans a further sum should be borrowed, to be applied as a sinking fund, for the purpose of gradually redeeming the addition thereby occasioned to the funded debt. Too much could not be said in commendation of
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the provident wisdom and justice of that measure, which is constantly employed in diminishing the pressure upon public credit, which arises from an increasing accumulation of the debt contracted since the commencement of the war; and in effecting an entire relief from its burdens perhaps to ourselves, but certainly, and at no distant period, to our descendants.

Some Gentlemen had entertained an opinion which, he acknowledged, was entitled to serious attention and consideration; that, as the proposed measure had been discountenanced by the House of Commons in Ireland, to persist in the discussion of it here, would be to add to the irritation which unhappily prevails in that country. Such an effect he should sincerely lament, and should be sorry to have any share in producing. There were other consequences, however, which it was of the utmost importance to avert. If the Parliament of this country were to abstain from declaring the conditions upon which it would be disposed to incorporate itself with the Parliament of Ireland, it was impossible not to be aware of the opportunity and scope which would be afforded for misconception, suspicion, and misrepresentation.

He trusted that we should adopt such resolutions as would rather tend to appease, than to inflame; such as would be a pledge of our liberality, and our justice: that we should manifest the earnestness and sincerity of our wishes to communicate to Ireland a full participation of all the advantages we enjoy; that we should prove ourselves desirous of considering the inhabitants of the two countries as

one people, connected together by the closest ties under the same Constitution, the same Parliament, and the same King.

He had understood that, if the Resolutions which had been opened should be agreed to, it would be proposed that they should be carried to the foot of the Throne, accompanied by an Address to his Majesty. In that Address he hoped, and was persuaded, that no sentiments or expressions would be introduced which jealousy might misinterpret, or malice pervert: that there would be no indication of a wish on our part to press the consideration of the question upon the Legislature of Ireland; and that no impulse would be given to it, but what it might derive from the free and unbiassed opinions, and dispassionate judgment of the Parliament and People of that kingdom.

The subject, he was convinced, would make its way. To Ireland he was satisfied that greater advantages were now held out, than had ever been afforded by any single measure to any country; that it would greatly augment the resources, and place upon a rock that would be impregnable, as far as that term could be applied to any human establishment, the strength and security of the British empire. He would, however, acknowledge, that his views and hopes extended still farther, as he was thoroughly persuaded, that whatever had a tendency to consolidate and maintain the power and the independence of these kingdoms, was of the deepest importance to the best and most valuable interests of mankind.—From these considerations he gave the Resolution his most cordial support.

THE
SUBSTANCE
OF THE
S P E E C H
OF
ROBERT PEELE, ESQUIRE,
IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On THURSDAY, the 14th of February, 1799,

ON THE
QUESTION for receiving the Report of the Committee on
the RESOLUTIONS respecting an
INCORPORATE UNION WITH IRELAND.

WITH A
Correct COPY of the RESOLUTIONS, as they
were finally amended by the House of Commons.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY JOHN EXSHAW, 98, GRAFTON-STREET
1799.

[Price a British Six-pence.]

THE
SUBSTANCE
OF THE
S P E E C H, &c.

MR. PEEL prefaced his Speech, by saying, That a regard for consistency made him anxious to trespass a few minutes on the patience of the House.

Mr. Speaker;

SIR,

In the year 1785, during the discussion of the Irish arrangements, as they were called, I was a petitioner at your bar against
those

those arrangements with Ireland ; and I am warranted in saying, that I carried with me the sentiments of a great proportion of the trading interest of England. The object of those propositions was to open a freer intercourse betwixt two independent kingdoms ; the one possessing great foreign dominions, and an universal commerce ; the other possessing no foreign dominions, and very little trade ; and, consequently, enjoying separate interests, as they always must, while they have separate legislatures ; because they may become separate, in fact. It was apparent, then, that those arrangements, however well intended, would have been prejudicial to the manufactures of Great Britain. The support I have given the present measure, does not arise from a change of sentiments, but of circumstances. This plan embraces great advantages, both political and commercial, which, by uniting two countries

countries into one country, are calculated to add strength and security to the Empire; and is so essentially necessary at this time, when a daring attempt has been made, both by intrigue, and force, to separate the countries, that inferior considerations ought not to weigh against a plan, which bids fair to frustrate such attempts, and to consolidate both the interest, and affections of the sister kingdoms. By an union we shall become one people; and though the benefits, in a commercial point of view, will be chiefly enjoyed by Ireland; yet, if an opinion may be formed of the sentiments of the trading body of this nation, from their patriotic and respectful silence, a disposition is manifested to reach out a friendly arm to their distressed brethren, to raise them from their present unhappy state to a condition of ease and comfort, similar to

our

our own. This conduct does the British merchants and manufacturers so much honour, that I feel particular pleasure in classing myself amongst that highly valuable and respectable body of men.

THOUGH a friend to the principle of the measure, I think it my duty to draw the attention of the house to the sixth * resolution. It must be the intention of every one to place both countries on an equal footing; and though nothing can be apprehended unfavourable to this country, during the present low circumstances of Ireland, it may have an operation, at a future time, highly prejudicial to our domestic industry. Each country is to provide for its own public debt; and that of Great Britain being infinitely larger than the debt of Ire-

* See the Resolutions at the end.

land,

land, heavy taxes are necessarily imposed on almost every article of consumption, which has so strong a tendency to enhance the price of labour, that goods manufactured under such a pressure, cannot be rendered on equally low terms with the produce of labour in places where similar burdens do not exist. Unless this objection be removed, the measure cannot be expected to have the concurrence of Great Britain. I feel it the more necessary to urge this point, having perceived a want of that liberality in the Irish government, which characterizes our own. The commercial intercourse now subsisting betwixt the two countries, has lost every feature of reciprocity; British manufactures being heavily taxed on their admission into Ireland, whilst the goods of that kingdom meet with every encouragement here. Whatever may be the conduct of Ireland
respecting

respecting the propositions of an union, I trust the firmness of administration will be such, as to refuse all concession to menace and intrigue; and that the aid which may be deemed necessary to extend in future to that nation, will be received as the genuine offspring of affection: I always will oppose the giving much for nothing, when demanded as a matter of right.

HAVING said thus much as a commercial man, I beg the further indulgence of the house as a member of parliament; though it may be deemed presumption in me to speak on a subject which has engaged the first abilities in this house, and after a display of talents on both sides, which never were exceeded. I see, with satisfaction, distinguished members of opposition in their places; because I think that their attendance on great constitutional questions,

questions, induces discussions highly useful and gratifying to the nation. I cannot, however, compliment them on the grounds they have taken in the present debate. The interests of Great Britain are so deeply involved in this question, that I did expect the nature, and extent, of the sacrifices to be made on our part would have been strongly laid down, and formed such a contrast to the imperial advantages so forcibly stated by the friends of administration, as to have enabled the house to come to a matured decision on the subject. Not having been so assisted, my first impressions are unaltered ; and there I shall give the measure my continued support. The independence of the Irish legislature having been unequivocally acknowledged by ministers, as it had been by Parliament, and strenuously insisted on by the other side of the house, I am the more surprised to find,

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that

that the measure of union has been debated by the latter on Irish interest only, as if the question were finally to be disposed of here, without being argued elsewhere.

THERE are scarcely two opinions in this house, respecting the utility of an union at a proper time, and on fair and equitable terms; though several gentlemen have expressed their marked disapprobation of the measure at this period. Considering the state of Ireland, with a weak government, a disunited people, and with the standard of rebellion erected in many parts of it, this plan is calculated to remove such alarming disorders; and the sooner the remedy is applied the better.

THE manner of bringing forward the resolutions is deemed objectionable. Several gentlemen are of opinion, that they ought
first

first to have been submitted to the Irish parliament, before they had experienced a discussion here. If the union involved in it sacrifices to be made exclusively on the part of Ireland, the complaint would have been just: the contrary, however, being the case, and the concessions confined to Great Britain, such a proceeding would have been highly disrespectful and injurious to this country.

THE feelings of pride and national consequence have been awakened in Ireland; they cannot reconcile themselves to the loss of their separate state, and distinct legislature: these are valuable privileges, boasted to have been acquired by their own exertion and patriotism, aided by the liberality of the British parliament. But let me ask, Has not Great Britain likewise valuable privileges, purchased with the
blood

blood of our ancestors? A distinct kingdom, and an independent legislature? A people united, and removed from every danger, either foreign or domestic?—In forming, therefore, an imperial legislature, Ireland loses no rights which are not likewise surrendered by Great Britain: the distinct kingdoms will be mixed into one compact body, and thereby derive additional strength and security: Ireland will gain by the proposed Union, an *imperial* legislature, instead of a *local* legislature.

The small proportion of Irish members forming a part of the imperial parliament is considered by many as a surrender of their independence. That an opinion so unfounded should be entertained by a stranger to the character and constitution of the British parliament does not excite much astonishment; but that it should meet with the smallest countenance from those

those who have uniformly declared, that a change in the Irish representation must be for the better, is, I own, a little extraordinary. Every member of this house is a representative of Great Britain, and does not consider his duties confined to the place for which he was chosen. Yorkshire and Lancashire are the most extensive and flourishing counties in England, though individually they are very inadequately represented. When, therefore the two countries are incorporated, it will be both the duty, and inclination of every member composing the imperial parliament, to promote the interest of Ireland equally with that of every other part of the united kingdom. Instead, therefore, of Ireland losing two-thirds of her members, she will increase the number from three hundred to six hundred and fifty-eight; and I shall not be contradicted in saying, if an union should take place, it
will

will be one of their first duties to administer relief, and ameliorate the condition of the people of Ireland, to communicate to them British comforts, and make them as flourishing and happy, as the people of Great Britain are, from enjoying the benefits of a more liberal system.

THE remarks of the honourable member who spoke first (Mr. Hobhouse) respecting an increase of Absentees, merits particular notice. I am ready to admit, to the fullest extent, the injury which has already resulted to the sister kingdom from this circumstance. In a country, however, governed by equal laws and a free constitution, I see no practicable means of compelling a residence, or removing the existing evil, under the present order of things. The proposed union will have an effect the very reverse of that on which the honourable
Gentleman

Gentleman founds his opposition. Scotland, and the parts of England most remote from London, sustain no injury on account of people of rank and property spending a great proportion of their time and income in the Capital. Manufactures, and other considerable objects of labour, generally flourish most at a distance from the seat of luxury, and the gay pursuits of genteel life. The want of access to the money circulating in England keeps Ireland comparatively poor and unindustrious. When the British markets are, therefore, laid open, property sent from that kingdom will be returned through the medium of industry, by which an equilibrium will be restored.

THE mind, unaccustomed to embrace objects of immense magnitude, will be assisted by a commercial intercourse. Suppose two houses in business, one of which is
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of the first respectability, with an immense capital, and extensive dealings in every part of the globe; the other in a comparatively low situation, with but little property, limited credit, and confined connections, and a proposal is made by the former, to take the latter into partnership on equal terms; such an offer never having been refused, we may easily suppose is eagerly accepted: in this case, each party will lose his distinct firm, and the two houses become one. It is unnecessary to ask here, on which side the advantage lies, though both may be benefited.

THE clamours raised against the Union by interested men in Ireland, may for a time mislead the judgment of many people; the delusion however cannot be of long continuance; and a proposition, the most liberal on the part of Great Britain, and on
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the acceptance of which the salvation of Ireland depends, must be received with sentiments of satisfaction, and gratitude, in the end, when reason shall take the place of passion; when policy shall prevail over prejudice; and wisdom shall govern, where enthusiasm misleads.

THE RESOLUTIONS,

As they were finally amended and sent by the Commons
to the Lords.

I. THAT in order to promote and secure the essential Interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the Strength, Power, and Resources of the British Empire, It will be adviseable to concur in such Measures as may best tend to unite the Two Kingdoms of Great Britain

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and

and Ireland into One Kingdom, in such Manner, and on such Terms and Conditions, as may be established by Acts of the respective Parliaments of His Majesty's said Kingdoms.

II. That it would be fit to propose, as the First Article, to serve as a Basis of the said Union, That the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland shall, upon a Day to be agreed upon, be united into One Kingdom, by the Name of "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

III. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the Succession to the Monarchy and the Imperial Crown of the said United Kingdom shall continue limited and settled in the same Manner as the Imperial Crown of the said Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now stands limited and settled, according to the existing Laws, and to the Terms of the Union between England and Scotland.

IV. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the said United Kingdom be represented in One and the same Parliament, to be stiled "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;" and that such a Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and such a Number of Members in the House of Commons, as shall

shall be hereafter agreed upon by Acts of the respective Parliaments as aforesaid, shall sit and vote in the said Parliament on the Part of Ireland, as shall be summoned, chosen, and returned in such Manner as shall be fixed by an Act of Parliament of Ireland previous to the said Union; and that every Member hereafter to sit and vote in the said Parliament of the United Kingdom, shall, until the said Parliament shall otherwise provide, take and subscribe the same Oaths, and make the same Declarations, as are by Law required to be taken, subscribed, and made by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

V. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the Churches of that Part of Great Britain, called England, and of that Part of Great Britain, called Scotland, and of Ireland, and the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline, and Government thereof, shall be preserved as now by Law established.

VI. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That His Majesty's Subjects in Ireland shall at all times hereafter be entitled to the same Privileges, and be on the same Footing, in respect of Trade and Navigation, in all Ports and Places belonging to Great Britain, and in
all

all Cases with respect to which Treaties shall be made by His Majesty, His Heirs or Successors, with any Foreign Power, as His Majesty's Subjects in Great Britain :—That no Duty shall be imposed on the Import or Export between Great Britain and Ireland of any Articles now Duty free ; and that on other Articles there shall be established, for a Time to be limited, such a moderate Rate of equal Duties as shall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the respective Parliaments ; subject, after the Expiration of such limited Time, to be diminished equally with respect to both Kingdoms, but in no Case to be encreased :—That all Articles which may at any Time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from Foreign Parts, shall be importable through either Kingdom into the other, subject to the like Duties and Regulations as if the same were imported directly from Foreign Parts :—That where any Articles, the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of either Kingdom, are subject to any internal Duty in one Kingdom, such countervailing Duties (over and above any Duties on Import to be fixed as aforesaid shall be imposed as shall be necessary to prevent any Inequality in that Respect :—And that all other Matters of Trade and Commerce, other than the foregoing, and than such others as may, before the Union, be specially agreed upon for the due Encouragement of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the respective Kingdoms, shall remain

to be regulated from Time to Time by the United Parliament.

VII. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That the Charge arising from the Payment of the Interest or Sinking Fund for the Reduction of the Principal, of the Debt incurred in either Kingdom before the Union, shall continue to be separately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland respectively :—That, for a Number of Years to be limited, the future Expences of the United Kingdom, in Peace or War, shall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to such Proportions as shall be established by the respective Parliaments previous to the Union ; and that, after the Expiration of the Time to be so limited, the Mode of jointly defraying such Expences shall be regulated, according to such Rules and Principles as shall be in like Manner agreed upon previous to the Union, for the Purpose of establishing, gradually, an uniform System of Taxation through every Part of the Kingdom.

VIII. That for the same Purpose it would be fit to propose, That all Laws in force at the Time of the Union, and all the Courts of Civil or Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction within the respective Kingdoms, shall remain as now by
Law

Law established within the same; subject only to such Alterations or Regulations from Time to Time as Circumstances may appear, to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to require.

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SUBSTANCE

OF

Lord Auckland's Speech,

&c. &c.

SUBSTANCE
OF THE
SPEECH
OF
LORD AUCKLAND,
IN THE HOUSE OF PEERS,
APRIL 11, 1799,
ON THE PROPOSED
ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY,
RESPECTING THE
RESOLUTIONS
ADOPTED BY
THE TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,
AS THE
BASIS OF AN UNION
BETWEEN
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR J. MILLIKEN, No. 32, GRAFTON-STREET.

1799.

SUBSTANCE

OF THE

S P E E C H, &c.

LORD GRENVILLE having moved the following Address to HIS MAJESTY, *viz.*

“ WE, your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects,
“ the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament
“ assembled, humbly beg leave to assure your Majesty,
“ that We have proceeded with the utmost attention to
“ the consideration of the important objects recommended to Us in your Majesty’s Message, respecting the
“ connection between this Country and Ireland.

“ We entertain a firm persuasion that a complete and
“ entire Union between Great Britain and Ireland,
“ founded on equal and liberal principles, on the
“ similarity of Laws, Constitution, and Government,
“ and on a sense of mutual interests and affections,
“ by promoting the security, wealth, and commerce,

“ of the respective Kingdoms, and by allaying the dis-
 “ tractions which have unhappily prevailed in Ireland, must
 “ afford fresh means of opposing at all times an effectual
 “ resistance to the destructive projects of our foreign and
 “ domestic enemies, and must tend to confirm and aug-
 “ ment the stability, power, and resources of the Empire.

“ Impressed with these considerations, We feel it our
 “ duty humbly to lay before your Majesty such Propositi-
 “ ons as appear to Us best calculated to form the basis of
 “ such a settlement, leaving it to your Majesty’s wisdom, at
 “ such time and in such manner as your Majesty, in your
 “ parental solicitude for the happiness of your People, shall
 “ judge fit, to communicate these propositions to your par-
 “ liament of Ireland, with whom we shall be at all times
 “ ready to concur in all such measures as may be found
 “ most conducive to the accomplishment of this great and
 “ salutary work. And We trust that, after full and ma-
 “ ture consideration, such a settlement may be framed and
 “ established by the deliberative consent of the Parlia-
 “ ments of both Kingdoms, as may be conformable to the
 “ sentiments, wishes, and real interests of your Majesty’s
 “ faithful subjects of Great Britain and Ireland, and may
 “ unite them inseparably in the full enjoyment of the blef-
 “ sings of our free and invaluable Constitution, in the sup-
 “ port of the honour and dignity of your Majesty’s Crown,
 “ and in the preservation and advancement of the welfare
 “ and prosperity of the whole British Empire ;”

LORD AUCKLAND *rose and spoke as follows :*

MY LORDS,

I rise with earnestness, and with peculiar satisfaction, to give my support to an Address to the revered Sovereign of the two Kingdoms, for the purpose of communicating our resolutions to the Lords and Commons of Ireland.

This measure will hold out to the Irish Nation a most solemn pledge of the liberality, affection, and wisdom, of the British Parliament; and will explicitly record the motives and principles by which we are guided in our endeavour to consolidate the Legislatures and unite the interests of Great Britain and of Ireland.

I feel no regret, my Lords, that I have waited in silence to the close of our proceeding. I willingly reposed myself on the superior abilities of others, for the discussion and explanation of the leading and general topics. It may still, however, be possible to throw new lights upon a question which involves the future government and well-being of the greatest empire now existing. Such a subject is inexhaust-

ible. The portion of it which I now propose to offer to your attention, is dry and of much detail. I undertake it only from a sense of duty; and it is an encouragement to me to think that our debates are contributing to the removal of many ill-founded notions and misrepresentations, which were prevalent in the Sister Kingdom.

Few indeed are those who now deny the necessity of some great change being made in the system of Irish Government; and I do not believe that any Noble Lord will maintain, as an unqualified proposition, that the Union of the two Kingdoms, accomplished on grounds satisfactory to each, would not promote the tranquillity, civilization, and prosperity of Ireland, and eventually the strength and security of Great Britain, and of the British Empire.

I assume accordingly, that an Union is desirable, if it can be reconciled to the opinions and goodwill of both the contracting parties.

The time was, my Lords, when the objections would have originated in this Kingdom;

and we cannot wonder that our ancestors seemed * to wish to avoid a measure, the immediate and most obvious benefits of which were always in favour of Ireland. It is now, however, well understood, that national wealth may be shared and extended, without lessening the prosperity of the country which gives the participation; and the good sense and enlightened liberality of our countrymen would at present induce them to rely cheerfully and confidently on their Parliament, both for the expediency of an Union and for the adjustment of the conditions.

But the consent and co-operation of Ireland are still wanting. Ireland, my Lords, must form her own decision; she must decide for herself, through the medium of the deliberate wisdom of her Parliament.

I am aware, and I admit, that the proposition, at its first opening, has not had the apparent assent of the Irish House of Commons. A small majority of the members who were pre-

* See the Appendix, No. 1.

sent declined the consideration of the measure, and some individuals refused even to know what it was. I will not attribute such a conduct to interested views, to false alarms, to fabricated clamour, to unthinking precipitancy, or to a false punctilio and a mistaken sense of national pride. I wish to avoid, and I disclaim, every sentiment and every expression that may be harsh or invidious : but I must be permitted to say, and I say it with satisfaction, that I know enough of the theatre of action, and of the principal actors upon that theatre, to do them the justice to believe, that their resistance will give way to the commanding voice of reason and of truth. Let it be shewn by our dispassionate deliberations, that the Union of the two Countries will be attended with many benefits to Ireland ; let it be recorded that we are disposed to confer those benefits to the utmost extent compatible with our own essential interests. Let this be done :—The calm hour of reflection will convince Ireland that the objections so hastily urged on her part are unsound and fallacious.

I do not think it necessary, my Lords, to attempt the examination of those objections. They have been amply confuted both in this Country and in Ireland. The unconstitutional doctrine which denies the competency of Parliament to effect an Union, and to operate what (by an inference falsely conceived and idly expressed) is called "its own extinction," was exploded even in the beginning of this century. It has been revived in the schools of modern democracy by the admirers of the sovereignty of the people, and accordingly has the strongest claims to contempt and rejection.

I propose, however, before I proceed to the commercial considerations, to examine the nature of that independence, which, as some advisers of the people of Dublin assert, will be subverted and destroyed by the consolidation of the two Legislatures. I think it important to ascertain the value of what Ireland is told she will lose, before I proceed to appreciate what it is that she will gain.

I recognize that independence of the Irish Legislature, abstractedly considered, as secured by the arrangement of 1782; but however perfect the independence may be in principle, it must at all times and in the nature of things be mutilated, and most imperfect in practice. We cannot shut our eyes against the truths presented by the map of Europe, and by the notoriety of the relative situation, size, and population, of the two Islands.

What then in point of fact is the independence of a country which has no means of defence, or security, or self-preservation, but through the aid and protection of its more powerful neighbour?

If two countries so circumstanced take adverse lines of conduct, a struggle must ensue, and either the weaker of the two must be overruled, or confusion and all the evils of war must follow. If, on the other hand, there should prevail between the two an uniform system and uniform principles of conduct, in leading points

of common concern, the weaker must be presumed to have thus far sacrificed, virtually and habitually, its exercise of independent power.

Let us, my Lords, apply this dilemma to the known and principal objects of national independence !

Has Ireland, or can she have, the power of negotiating, controuling, or even of rejecting treaties, notwithstanding that those treaties may involve the most essential interests of the British empire, of which she forms a part ? Has she the means of protecting her own commerce, or of establishing colonies, or of making and holding conquests ? Has she any property, or direct concern in the acquisitions made by the fleets and armies of the Sovereign ? Has she, or can she have, any naval force ? And is not the direction of her military force necessarily conformable to the opinion of British Ministers responsible only to the British Parliament ? Has she, in short, or can she have, any control whatever, or any interference, or even any concern, otherwise than in a visionary and abstract claim, re-

specting the imperial transactions of peace and war, alliances and confederacies? Has she, even in the exercise of legislation, any access to the Royal sanction, otherwise than through British Ministers not amenable to her Parliament, and under the Great Seal of the British Chancellor.

But I wave all these considerations; though they ought to be strong inducements to Ireland not merely to accede to the proposed Union, but to seek and solicit it. I wave them all, and will suppose Ireland to have every advantage possessed by Great Britain, and in an equal degree. I will suppose the two Islands to be similar, in size and population; in wealth, cultivation, and commerce; in conquests and in colonies; and to be placed upon the globe within a few leagues of each other. Still however with one executive power; and with separate and independent legislatures.

Will any individual of sound mind assert, that the entire Union of two countries such as I have described would be degrading or detrimental to either?

And by what line of reasoning shall a different inference be drawn when the two countries, thus nearly adjoining, happen to be utterly unequal in size and in force? I contend that the inferior of the two, so situated, never can retain its connexion and at the same time possess either real independence or an uncontrouled and safe prosperity, otherwise than by uniting with its more powerful neighbour; and that its wish for Union ought to increase in proportion to its inferiority in force.

I might rest this assertion on the experience of Ireland herself. For is it not true, that whilst Great Britain has gradually advanced in civilization of manners, and in every art, science, and improvement, which can give happiness, honour, and security, to nations and to individuals; Ireland possessing the same climate, a fruitful soil, and excellent ports, and a numerous people, to whom the Common Parent of all gave great acuteness and ingenuity, has nevertheless been at all times involved in comparative disorder, poverty, turbulence, and wretchedness? I might add, without exaggeration, that in the

600 years since the reign of Henry II. there has been more unhappiness in Ireland, than in any other civilized nation, not actually under the visitation of pestilence, or of internal war. And all these evils may be traced to the disjointed and jarring action of two unequal powers, closely adjacent to each other, possessing the same interests and subject to the same Crown, but with separate legislatures.

But why should I confine myself to times in which a persecuting policy was avowedly exercised against Ireland, upon principles of commercial jealousy? Let us now look to a period within the memory of most of us; the period immediately previous to the attainment of what Ireland was pleased to call a free trade and a free constitution.

Many of your Lordships were Members of this House, whilst the British Parliament still continued to assert and to exercise the claim to make laws for Ireland, as “being subject to the imperial Crown of Great Britain.” Ireland at that time held the functions of legislation

more in ceremony than in substance. Her laws originated in the Privy Councils of the two kingdoms, and were prepared and approved by the English Attorney-General. And even when a law had passed through the Irish Parliament, it was still liable to be corrected, changed, or suppressed, by the British Cabinet.

Ireland was then also as subordinate in judicature as in legislation. We made her laws, and we interpreted them. Appeals from the decisions of her judges were to the Courts of Westminster and to this House. It may also be recollected, that at the time to which I refer, the hereditary revenue of Ireland was almost sufficient for the support of Government ; and the Irish army was established under the British Mutiny-Bill ; and afterwards under a Mutiny-Bill passed in Ireland, but made perpetual.

I was not sorry that such a system should cease. It certainly did not allow to Ireland more than the name of the British Constitution, or more than the semblance and mockery of a free government.

But, my Lords, I was not so short-sighted as to persuade myself that, because the Irish freedom, as it was called, took place, Irish prosperity would be the consequence, unless much more could be done.

The law of Poynings, degrading and galling as it might be, nevertheless, united the Laws and Constitution of the two kingdoms. And the appellant jurisdiction of this House, justly and greatly respected by the Irish themselves, assimilated their jurisprudence to ours. When those links of connexion were broken, it was evident that Ireland must soon suffer disadvantages much greater than those which had so long depressed her. Neither prosperity, nor tranquillity, nor safety were to be expected from a government founded in the pretensions of a small part of the community to monopolize the representation, patronage, and resources of the whole. The insufficiency of such a system had been felt and lamented for a century, even whilst it was controuled, directed, and supported by the Protestant Parliament of this Protestant kingdom. Now that it was ceasing to be connected with that

Parliament, it became more than ever unsatisfactory to the bulk of the Irish nation, and utterly incompetent and unsafe with respect to the general interests of the British empire.

And here, my Lords, it may add some little weight to my reasonings, if I may be permitted to explain that I have at all times endeavoured to promote the commercial prosperity and constitutional freedom of Ireland; and that what I am now going to state is the result, not of new motives, but of long meditation, and of opinions repeatedly avowed. In doing this, I must necessarily make a short reference to past transactions; but that referenoe will be found connected, in all its parts, with the business now before us.

So early as in 1779, I stated and published* the expediency of that enlarged system of commerce which was then demanded by Ireland, and which was granted by us a few months afterwards. In 1780, I went to Ireland as Chief Secretary in a Vice-Royalty, which at its close

* Fourth Letter to the Earl of Carlisle.

(in 1782) received, from the Irish Parliament, strong assurances* of national gratitude and respect. In the session of 1781, I was specially named, with the Recorder of Dublin, to be of the Committee for the Bill which extended to Ireland the writ of Habeas Corpus by an Irish law. In the same session, I promoted the Bill for making the Irish Judges independent. I then, also, framed the whole institution of the Bank of Ireland, and introduced the Act which established it.

In 1782, I was the first to propose, in the British Parliament, the repeal of the Statute, 6 Geo. I. which asserted the right to bind Ireland by British laws. When I made the proposition, it was treated, by some persons who now hear me, as violent and precipitate, and as dictated by a party animosity and peevishness, which in truth I never felt. That incident is become matter of history; and I may now say, without scruple, that my conduct was governed by what I conceived to be a just sense of minis-

* See Appendix, No. 2.

terial and personal engagements. The repeal of our declaratory statute had long been thought desirable by the Government and Vice-Royalty under which I was serving, and my endeavour to procure that repeal had been the only stipulation made with me, by some leading persons, as the honourable price of their support. I allude to individuals who now hold very high situations in Ireland, and with whom I have ever since lived in full confidence and cordial friendship.

It is, my Lords, in most cases, objectionable, to refer to the printed statements of Parliamentary debates. Whatever ability or fairness may be employed by the reporter, we know that such statements are generally erroneous;—still, however, it may happen that the substance and accuracy of particular passages may be verified (as far as human evidence can go) by the context and by other circumstances. Subject to this caution, I solicit your Lordships' attention to the sentiments attributed to me at the epoch to which I am alluding. It was in January, 1783. A noble Viscount, then in the

House of Commons, proposed * a Bill “for removing all doubts concerning the exclusive rights in the Parliament and Courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and judicature.”

“Mr. Eden stated and avowed his opinion, that it was for the interest of an empire that a supremacy of legislation, over all its constituent parts, should reside within the metropolis of the empire.”—“He reminded Mr. Fox, that he (Mr. Eden) had consented to the abolition of the appellant jurisdiction, and to the alteration of Poyning’s law, in the confidence only of measures being taken, pursuant to the resolutions and address, to establish the connexion of the two Kingdoms on a firm and permanent basis.”—“He had relied on a treaty being opened, between the two Parliaments, for the purposes of arranging not only commercial points, but all the great questions involved in the future events of peace and war, foreign alliances, commercial treaties, limitation of armies, building and support of

* Debrett’s Parliamentary Register, vol. ix. p. 142, 143. 153.

“ navies, proportionable supplies, with the whole
 “ immense detail under each of those heads.
 “ He should then, and not till then, think that
 “ the connexion was established. And when
 “ the two Kingdoms had thus realized *one con-*
 “ *stitution*, one commerce, one king, one enemy,
 “ and one fate, it would become impossible for
 “ any man to wish the prosperity of the one
 “ country more ardently and more earnestly
 “ than the prosperity of the other.”

My Lords, the import of those expressions certainly went to the full extent of Union.— I may appeal to what passed, two years afterwards, on the occasion of the Irish Propositions. It happened to me to take a considerable share in the debates of that session, and to insist that one of two lines, respecting our commerce with Ireland, was proper to be adopted—either, that arrangements between the two countries should be settled by negotiation and treaty, as between two independent nations, giving equivalents for advantages interchanged; or, that an union of commerce, policy, and legislation, should take place. Many respectable and most intelligent

manufacturers concurred in those opinions, which were strongly urged in their addresses to Parliament.—“ We are fully convinced (said “ the Manchester Petition) that no system but “ what prescribes a participation of burdens as “ well as of advantages can be fair, equitable, “ or permanent; and, therefore, that a complete Union is the best means of establishing “ harmony and good will between the two “ nations.”

The General Chamber of British Manufacturers published, on the 18th May, 1785, some objections to the amended Irish Resolutions; when, after stating the expediency of “ becoming one people under one parliament,” they added, that “ a real Union with Ireland, under “ one legislature, would take away every difficulty.”

These suggestions were the result of plain sense, and strongly applicable to the questions then under discussion. I think them equally applicable to the actual existing situation of the two countries.

It became a general opinion that uniformity of law must accompany the communication of permanent advantages ; and those who had introduced the Commercial Propositions, admitted the doctrine, with the wisdom and liberality which have so long distinguished their conduct. The fourth article was accordingly introduced as an amendment, expressly stating, that “ the laws for trade and navigation should be the same in Great Britain and in Ireland.” The Irish Parliament in 1780, on being admitted to a direct trade with our Colonies, had already recognized the same principle, and still act under it; but in 1785, such a condition was not reconcileable to the new notions of liberty. The present Speaker of Ireland combated those new notions with much eloquence, ingenuity, and force, in a speech which would derive great credit from the known ability and accuracy of the reporter, even if the report had not always been understood in this instance to be faithful and authentic. † Some of Mr. Grattan’s expressions on that occasion deserve to be recollected. He op-

† Sketch of the Debate of August 12, 1785, by W. Woodfall, p. 105 to p. 112.

posed the Propositions :—" We are told (said he)
 " that the laws respecting commerce and naviga-
 " tion should be similar ; and it is *inferred*, that
 " Ireland should subscribe the laws of England
 " on those subjects."—" It is an Union, an inci-
 " pient and a creeping Union ; a virtual Union,
 " establishing one will in the general concerns
 " of commerce and navigation, and reposing
 " that will in the Parliament of Great Britain ;
 " an Union, where our Parliament preserves its
 " existence after it has lost its authority." " I
 " consider myself as opposing an Union *in*
 " *limine*, and that argument for Union which
 " makes similarity of law and community of
 " interest a pretence for extinction of constitu-
 " tion."*—In this instance I can agree with
 Mr. Grattan, and the opinion is well and ably
 expressed. A commercial system so settled
 would certainly imply an equality of commerce
 purchased by an inequality of constitution. Si-
 milarity of law in the two countries can only
 be secured, either by virtual Union, in which the
 Legislature of the one country must be under-

† Sketch of the Debate of August 12, 1785, by W.
 Woodfall, p. 31.

stood to controul and supersede the Legislature of the other ; or by the incorporating Union and blending of the two Legislatures, so as to place on an equal basis the liberties of both countries. And yet this similitude of law is indispensable in communicating to Ireland a full and permanent commerce, which alone can give to her people, employment, capital, opulence, and industry.

Such, my Lords, were the impressions and reasonings which determined me to call for the accounts now under our view. And having fully considered them, I venture to repeat what I said in moving for them, that the commercial interests exhibited and proved in these papers will have more effect, than any other consideration, in finally accomplishing the Union of the two kingdoms.

It would, my Lords, be grating to the feelings of us all, to state to Ireland, that she is chained down, though by her own prejudices, to a weak and inefficient independence, subject to incessant collisions, and inseparable from mis-

fortune and humiliation : I should think it ungenerous to make such a statement, if it were not in my power to present to her at the same time a real and permanent independence, accompanied by a full participation of British opulence, British greatness, and British freedom, with its best companion, British security.

A nation with plain and undisguised truths of this magnitude before her eyes, cannot long be influenced by misrepresentations, or by the partial interests of a few, who may struggle to retain an ascendancy incompetent and irreconcilable to the happiness of the whole.

I shall not advert more particularly to the Irish metropolis, though it would be easy to shew that Dublin will be greatly advanced in employment, population, rents, and wealth, by the effect of the proposed measure. The produce of the Income-Tax will ascertain, that the opulence of our own metropolis depends in a small proportion on the occasional residence of the members of the Legislature ; that opulence is chiefly derived from the activity and energy of

our commercial credit and capitals, which can never be communicated to the Sister Kingdom otherwise than by a Legislative Union. But I wish to speak of Ireland in general. The interests of her merchants and manufacturers, and of the owners and occupiers of land, will best be understood by a short analysis of the printed accounts to which I now solicit your Lordships particular attention.

It is impossible, my Lords, to open and contemplate these papers without exultation of mind, at so brilliant an exhibition of the increasing prosperity of Great Britain, and of her unexampled pre-eminence among nations. We see her, mistress of the trade of the world, and possessing a navy amply adequate to the protection of such a trade. We saw without surprise the late avowal of our enemy, that she has not one merchant vessel upon the sea.

These papers will give to your Lordships, what has never before been attempted, the true valuation of our whole commerce according to current prices and to other documents, the ac-

curacy of which is incontestable. It has been a task of great labour and difficulty, and could not have been completed but by the intelligent exertions and well tried accuracy and ability of the present Inspector-General.

It appears, accordingly, that the total value of our imports and exports in the year 1798* was ninety-five millions sterling;—above twenty-two millions higher than the average value of the four last years of peace.

This astonishing amount will be placed beyond all suspicion of exaggeration, when I remark, that the true value of the imports, amounting to 46,963,000*l.* has been obtained from a strict enquiry into the prices current, as well as from the duties payable at a specific rate, in proportion to the true value of each article, which value has been adjusted by the officer with the importers and dealers. The valuation of the exports, amounting to above forty-eight millions, has been ascertained in a manner nearly

* See Appendix, No. 3.

similar; and it is not to be presumed, that however undoubted the integrity of the merchants may be, they have paid *ad valorem* duties beyond the true estimate; and certainly the total, which already much exceeds all our prior calculations, might fairly be carried to above one hundred millions sterling.

If it should occur to any Noble Lord, that the apparent balance of our trade, being only one million, is less than might be supposed, I beg leave to remark, that in order to arrive at the true balance, we must recollect, that for a great part of the imports from our East and West India settlements, and also from the fisheries, no price whatever is remitted beyond what is necessary to carry forwards and to maintain the cultivation and supply of those settlements and fisheries. A great addition must therefore be made to the favourable balance, which, probably, is little short of eight or ten millions. Some respectable calculations go much higher. It is, however, sufficient to know and to be convinced, that the balance, whether

more or less, is as high as the real and permanent interests of our commerce will bear.

The British manufactures exported in 1798, and which make a part of the great total of ninety-five millions, amounted to no less a sum than 36,600,000l.* being 6,477,000l. higher than the average export of our manufactures in the four last years of peace.

It may not be immaterial to keep in view these general outlines of that commerce, the unqualified participation of which we are offering to Ireland. I will now proceed to the more confined discussion of the trade between the two countries.

The annual average import into Great Britain from Ireland, during the last four years of peace, was about 4,900,000l.; and for the three years ending the 5th of January, 1799, it was above 5,500,000l.; being an increase of about 600,000l.

* See Appendix, No. 3.

Upon our intire trade with Ireland, the annual balance in her favour is above two millions ; and upon the interchange of the products and manufactures of the two countries, the balance in favour of Ireland is above 3,400,000l.*

And here, my Lords, allow me to specify the principal articles of our commerce with Ireland, and to examine the causes which give, to her, apparent advantages of great extent, and at the same time, under her present circumstances, of little avail.

The printed statements shew, that two-fifths of the average exports from Great Britain to Ireland, for the last three years, consisted of East Indian, Colonial, and Foreign articles. We sent them to the amount of 1,468,000l.: we gave an entire drawback of the duties ; and the revenue annually received by Ireland on this branch of our trade was about 345,000l. British money.†

* See Appendix, No. 4 and 5.

† See Appendix, No. 6.

The remaining three-fifths of the British exports to Ireland may be classed under the heads of British manufactures and products. The total average value of the manufactures exported to Ireland, when distinguished from what comes under the description of products, was 1,640,000*l.*; being about one-twentieth of our whole export of manufactures. The principal article is that of woollens, in value 686,000*l.*; about one-twelfth of our woollens exported: The other articles separately taken are of small amount, and consist of cottons, cotton-yarn, wrought-iron, leather, glass, earthen-ware, &c.

The articles of British products exported to Ireland are essential to the Irish manufactures, such as oak-bark, coals, bar-iron, hops, lead, and salt. The most important article is that of coals. Your Lordships see, that we annually send to Ireland above 300,000 chaldrons, subject to a duty of only 1*s.* 2*d.* per chaldron; at the same time that our coasting trade pays 5*s.* 9*d.*; and that the duties paid in the metropolis of England amount to 9*s.* 3*d.* A revenue of 600,000*l.* is raised in this kingdom

on coals : Ireland, however, pays no more than 17,900*l.* for the duties on all that we supply to her : and an Irish duty is levied in Dublin of 1*s.* 9*d.* per ton, with the exemption only of such coals as may be used to promote against us the rival manufactures of glass and refined sugar.

Other products, such as allum, bark, bar-iron, hops, lead, and salt, are subject to similar remarks ; they go free from this country, and pay considerable duties in Ireland.

The average revenue raised in Ireland on British products and manufactures is 194,000*l.*—The revenue raised in Great Britain on Irish products and manufactures is 10,850*l.*

I shall now, my Lords, proceed to examine how far the same liberal system prevails respecting the exports from Ireland to Great Britain, and to the British settlements.

I admit, that on some articles of manufacture our protecting duties are nearly prohibitory. But I venture to assert, that the entire abolition

of all those duties would, in the present relative circumstances of Ireland, have no effect whatever. If, indeed, the two kingdoms were blended in their legislatures and interests, so as to establish, between the opposite sides of St. George's Channel, the same sort of connexion, interest, and intercourse, which now subsists between the opposite banks of the Humber or the Thames, I willingly believe, that the gradual extension of English capital, and the gradual interchange of workmen, would transfer to Ireland a full participation not only in the woollen and cotton manufactures, but in many other branches of employment. The credit and capital, which are now pent up within Great Britain, would then descend like water to a level, and diffuse themselves equally over both kingdoms. There is nothing in such an operation, when maturely arranged and prepared, which ought not to satisfy those, on the one hand, who dread the removal of their wealth to a country where taxes are comparatively low; or those, on the other hand, who affect to dread an increased taxation. The virtual and gradual equalizing of burdens, as well as of benefits,

is implied in all these statements, and would be accomplished by an united, wise, and provident legislature, without any shock to the interests of either contracting party.

In the mean time, it cannot have escaped your Lordships observation, that the duties alluded to are on articles which we are exporting in considerable quantities to Ireland, such as woollens, cottons, and leather manufactured.—Let it also be remarked, that our woollens are subject in Ireland, on a fair average value of the whole export, to about $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem*; and yet the Irish market takes our woollens to the amount of 686,000*l.* a-year.

Our cotton goods pay a duty in the Irish ports of 9*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.* per cent. *ad valorem*; and yet the value of our cottons imported into Ireland is about 70,000*l.* a-year.

But the instance of leather manufactured and tanned is still more remarkable. We bring the chief raw material from Ireland, charged there with an export duty, and we prepare it and

send it back to Ireland, to the annual amount of 152,000*l.* It is subject to an import duty paid there, of nearly 10 per cent. *ad valorem*.—We are, nevertheless, able to enter into competition with Ireland even in her own market, though she possesses the raw material, and though we supply her with tanner's bark free of all duty.

I will not detain your Lordships farther in the discussion of articles which, it is evident, would not be sent to us even if all the duties were removed. I think it sufficient to have shewn, that the existence of those duties is in effect no exception to the liberality of our general system.

There are, however, some products and manufactures which Ireland is able to supply to a considerable extent.

The cattle and provisions, furnished annually by Ireland to Great Britain, amount to no less a sum than two millions sterling annually. A duty too, producing about 30,000*l.* is charged in

Ireland on that whole export : and yet we prohibit in time of peace the admission of provisions from other countries, and do not even permit the United States of America to send provisions to our islands and fisheries. I do not wish, at present, to examine the policy of these exclusive encouragements, nor whether it may be a detriment to our own agriculture to import Irish provisions duty free. The quantity purchased by us is apparently large, and such as at first sight might seem difficult to be replaced, if ever the channel of supply should be suddenly checked. But when it is considered in the scale of our general consumption, its importance is much diminished. I find, for instance, that all the beef which we take from Ireland, including what is furnished for our fleets, is less than one-third of what is annually sold in Smithfield.†

The only other article of Irish products, imported by us to any considerable amount, is that of oats, which may be stated at 200,000*l.* sterling.

I now come, my Lords, to the exported manufactures of Ireland, which are nearly comprized in the single article of linen. I am content to take the valuation as it is given in the papers before us (1s. 5d. per yard,) though I believe it to be below the true average price. It appears, then, by the accounts on your table, that, in the last three years, the annual import of Irish linens (being thirty-seven millions of yards) amounted to 2,600,000*l.* to which may be added linen-yarn, the valuation of which was 243,000*l.*

If any of your Lordships happen to be in possession of the accounts of the Irish Custom-house, you will find that the annual export of Irish linens, to all the world, is there stated at about forty millions of yards, and that seven-eighths of the whole, or thirty-five millions, are taken by Great Britain and her colonies.†—Such is the quantity and proportion imported for British consumption, free of duty, and under favour of a protecting duty equal to 25 per cent. imposed on the linen of all other countries!—

† See Appendix, No. 8.

and whatever part of that quantity is not consumed in England, is exported to other countries by the aid of British credit and of a British bounty.

How far this system may be beneficial to England; whether the duties on linens from the continent, with a total exemption in favour of Ireland, have tended to increase the restraints in foreign countries upon our manufactures; and whether, if the Russian and German linens were less discouraged by us, a larger demand for our woollens and cottons would not take place in return; are questions of great moment, which I am not now solicitous to discuss. The beneficial effects of such a system, with respect to Ireland at least, are not equivocal, and may be traced in the printed Report of the late Board of Trade in 1780. It appears, in that Report, that the linen manufactures of Ireland have been gradually raised to their present flourishing state, and are still rising in prosperity, solely by the operation and effect of British care and encouragement. The import into Great Britain, in 1743, when the present system commenced,

was 6,418,000 yards; in 1773, it was 17,876,000 yards; in 1783, 21,000,000 yards; and in 1798, 37,000,000 yards.

The export, with bounty, in 1743, was 40,900 yards; in 1773, 2,832,000 yards; and in 1798, 6,400,000 yards.

The foreign linens, in 1743, were three-fourths of our whole import; at present, they are only one-fourth.

But here, my Lords, I think it just and necessary to remark, that by our actual system we are subjecting ourselves to one of two disadvantages; either to an increase of price equal to about 25 per cent. on the value, which falls on the consumer; or, to a proportionate loss of revenue:—and that the amount (being 25 per cent. on 2,600,000*l.*) is in either case 650,000*l.*

For, a moment's reflection will shew, that if the foreign linens, charged as they are with a duty of 25 per cent. can come into competition with the Irish, which are duty free, those

same foreign manufactures would soon be able to supply all our demand, and might be consumed at 25 per cent. below the present price, if they were relieved from duty as the Irish are. On the other hand, the Irish linens, if subjected to the foreign duties, must either be furnished by Ireland at 25 per cent. below their present price, or be driven out of the market. In this latter case, too, an addition of 650,000*l.* would be made to our revenue ; unless, indeed, the encouragement which such a change might give to our home-made linens should occasion a decrease in the general import.

Such are the effects of our liberality towards Ireland in this important manufacture, which constitutes in value nearly one-half of the Irish exports to all the world. And there now lies on that table a Bill, which we are passing, to continue our bounties on Irish linens. And yet, a few weeks ago, the following phrases were gravely addressed, by an eminent person, to the county of Louth.

“ In truth, I see much danger, and a probable decrease of our trade and manufactures, from the measure of a Legislative Union, and I cannot conceive any advantage to them from it.”

“ If the linen manufacture rests at all on any compact, that compact was made with the Irish Parliament, the extinction of which takes away a security we had found adequate, and leaves it without the protection of its natural guardians, who, by *their* vigilance, *their* regulations, and *their* bounties, have more than doubled its exports within a few years. As an Irishman, then, I should oppose the measure.”

I know nothing of the compact here alluded to; and I am unable to annex sense to the word “extinction,” as applied to the projected Union of the two legislatures. But I perfectly understand, and know, that the annual importation of Irish linens, to the amount of nearly three millions sterling, is a sort of monopoly given to Ireland in the British market; and that

the existence and continuance of that monopoly do not depend on the vigilance, regulations, and bounties, of the Irish Parliament, but on *our* liberality, *our* regulations, and *our* bounties; and are intirely subject to the gratuitous favour, good will, and dispensations of the British Parliament!

It will also be obvious, to the most superficial observer, that if Ireland has obtained and enjoyed these advantages, through the indulgence of the British seperate legislature, in despite of any spirit of rivalship or jealousy, she will be more likely to increase than to forfeit them, when she shall be incorporated as a part of the same kingdom, and when Irish representatives shall form a proportion of the united Parliament.

In addition to the indulgences which I have described, we have given to Ireland many privileges for the encouragement of her fisheries. We have also relaxed the whole system of our navigation laws, and permit the produce of our colonies to be imported to us through the Irish

ports. I do not lay much stress on the probable benefits of these concessions. They were, indeed solicited as of great importance. But Ireland, nevertheless, continues to be supplied through Great Britain not only with fish, to the amount of 113,000*l.* annually; she also receives rum, sugars, indigo, and tobacco, circuitously (and with all the expence of landing, warehousing, reshipping, commission, &c.) to the annual amount of more than 500,000*l.* at the same time that her direct importation of these articles is valued at not more than 140,000*l.* a year. Nor will she ever be able to avail herself of our concessions, without the aid of British capital and confidence, which can only be obtained by Union. Hitherto there hardly exists an instance of any considerable British House engaged in Ireland in Irish Partnership.

The general results are, that of the whole amount of Irish exports to all the world, about eight-ninths are sent to Great Britain and to

British dependencies ; * that of the exports from Ireland to Great Britain amounting in value to 5,600,000*l.* nearly the whole is received in our ports free of duty, but is subject to export duties in Ireland, and contributes thereto to her local revenue as a charge imposed on our consumption. On the other hand, that what we send to Ireland is about a tenth only of our whole export ; that about two-fifths of what is so sent to Ireland, consist of foreign articles exported free of duty. That though the trade of Ireland with this country is about one-ninth of our whole commerce, the revenue received upon it, instead of being one-ninth of our customs, is less than the 140th part. For example, † that Ireland pays only 47,500*l.* in duties of customs upon the whole of her trade with us, at the same time that we are receiving from other nations in customs 6,850,000*l.* and even from that small amount of 47,500*l.* we pay on the average about 35,000*l.* a-year in bounties on Irish linens.

* See Appendix, No. 9.

† See Appendix, No. 1.

But it is not merely that the imports from Ireland are free of duty here. What we export to Ireland is highly charged by her. She accordingly raised annually on her trade with Great Britain and the British dependences, by the average of the last three years, a revenue of 622,000*l.* * of which sum 194,000*l.* were levied on English products and manufactures. The duties which she levies annually on her whole trade with all other parts amount to about 209,000*l.*

And yet, notwithstanding all these encouragements, Ireland, with a population equal perhaps to one-third of the British population, has a trade equal to not more than one-ninth of the trade of Great Britain.

And, lastly, that the small and disproportionate commerce which she possesses is almost intirely dependant on British generosity, and on laws made in Great Britain.

* See Appendix, No. 6.

My Lords, there is a well known line,

*Isthæc commemoratio
Quasi exprobratio est immemoris benefici;*

I mention it merely to deprecate and disclaim the application of it. The statement which I this day submit to your Lordships is not given grudgingly, no for the purpose of conveying either reproach or menace. It is my sincere wish neither to irritate nor to alarm; but to conciliate, and, if possible, to convince.

It would be idle to imagine, that in a British Parliament, this great question can be debated with flattery, and complaisance, and reserves, and no Irish interests only. The people of Ireland ought not to be kept in ignorance that numerous and essential benefits are conferred on them without reciprocity: but that those benefits, without Union, remain liable, on any eventual disagreement, to a sudden explosion, with the utter ruin of all the Irish interests dependant on trade and manufactures.

I have not hesitated to display these truths to our own manufacturers and merchants ; because I know it to be their wish, as it always has been mine, to extend to Ireland, even without Union, every accession of prosperity that can be made compatible with our own well being and security. If indeed it should ever appear, that Ireland were seeking strength at our expence, in order to make that strength operate to the weakening of the British empire, then and then only, would the manufacturers and merchants object loudly to the system of gratuitous concessions ; and then, and only then, would I join my voice to theirs.

And surely it cannot be either unfriendly or ungenerous to point out to the party obliged, the means of giving both permanency and effect to the benefits which are conferred. Can the superior country be expected to enrich, beyond certain limits, the inferior, without having some security that the wealth, and strength, and resources of the one may be considered as the wealth, strength, and resources of the other.

Or is it to be expected that capitals and commercial credit shall be transferred to a country struggling under an anomalous, incompetent, and disturbed government, and maintaining a claim of right to adopt at any time adverse connections and interests? Nothing less than Union can satisfy these questions. We cannot rest on the flimsy and undefined protestation so often repeated, and so imperfectly realized, that “the affections of Ireland are unalienable, and that both kingdoms shall stand and fall together.” Let the Union take place, and all commercial distinctions, and all political jealousies will be annihilated; for there can be no competition between two parts of the same kingdom, having incorporated Interests directed by one legislature.

These reasonings are not new; in the discussions between the Scotch and English Commissioners, under Charles II.* it was admitted by the Scots, that, without Union, they could

* See the Report lately printed by Mr. Bruce, and the State Papers which are annexed to it, No, 36 and No, 43,

have no pretensions to commercial privileges beyond what might be given to any alien power; and that all indulgences enjoyed whilst the two nations remained separate, must in their nature, be subject to English controul and to English laws. And it was then also particularly stated, that if Ireland possessed any advantages in the English trade, they depended solely on her being bound by English laws; or by laws made in Ireland, but originating in the the English privy Council.

What then, my Lords, are the multiplied and inestimable benefits which our Address and Propositions hold out to Ireland?—The preservation of her actual advantages, the extension of capitals, the increased employment of her people with the consequent cultivation and softening of their minds and manners; and, above all, the introduction of a middle class, one of the great wants of Ireland, and the most important link of security between the highest and lowest orders.—Still leaving to her the same constitution, the same liberties, the same laws,

and the same privileges, that she enjoys at present.

We do not, however, propose this measure as calculated at once to dispel the cloud of foreign war and domestic treasons, which has so long darkened the Irish atmosphere. Undoubtedly the Union of the two countries might tend to correct the pestilential exhalations which prevail. But that effect would be gradual, and perhaps slow. I look rather to the effect which would be produced on a return of peace. Ireland would then be governed as the rest of the British Empire is governed; a new order of things would take place; and the manners, principles, and opinions, of the two Islands would at last be assimilated. Can it, my Lords, be offensive to add, that Ireland ought to feel an honourable pride in being invited to an Union with all those blessings of Industry, order, and law, which have rendered Great Britain the Glory and bulwark of civil society, and have secured to her the envy and admiration of the World.

And here I shall close; trusting that with fairness and moderation I have urged what occurs to me, in support of a measure which, in the emphatical words of the King's message, "may best tend to improve and perpetuate a connection essential for the common security of the two Kingdoms, and to augment and consolidate the strength, power, and resources, of the British Empire."

We know that this measure is dreaded by the revolutionists of the day: we have seen that the separation of the two kingdoms is the first object of the unprincipled and implacable nation which is making a wild and cruel war on the liberties of mankind.—The separation also of Scotland from England was in like manner fought in the very beginning of the contest.—
 "We rejoice (said the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin to their Delegates in Scotland, in 1792) that the Scots do not consider themselves as merged and melted down into another country, and that in the great question

“ to which our address alludes, they are still
 “ Scotland.”

The Revolutionary Committee of Nine, assembled in Dublin on the 9th April, 1795, expressed themselves in the same spirit, by a resolution,
 “ collectively and individually to resist even their
 “ own emancipation, if made to depend on the
 “ fatal measure of Union with the Sister kingdom.”

MY LORDS!

In this awful period of crimes and calamities, amidst the subversion of states and empires, and when the whole system of human affairs seems to be convulsed and endangered, the great and glorious fabric of British liberty stands unmoved and unshaken. We offer to Ireland the full participation of our happiness and security.—And unless Providence shall have withdrawn from her all mercy and protecting influence; unless the dispensations are to be such as

* Report of Committee of Secrecy, p. 12.

to number her among the wrecks of nations, she will gladly and gratefully receive our offer, and will become an integral part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.—

There remains one point, my Lords, on which before I sit down, I must say a few words.—Some of the Noble Lords who seemed to oppose the measure of Union, have been pleased to talk much, though somewhat indefinitely, respecting what is most improperly termed, Catholic Emancipation. I am not disposed to follow them into the entanglements of a discussion in which I see no possible good, and much possible mischief.—Nor is such discussion now necessary. Our Fifth and Eight Resolutions are clear and intelligible, and do not seem either to require or to admit any amendment.—It has long been my opinion, that whatever may be the indulgences, whether more or less limited, to the Catholics in England; the measure of those indulgences ought to guide our discretion with respect to the Catholics in Ireland. I am of opinion, that such a rule is best calculated

for the security happiness, and true interests, of both persuasions. I sincerely lamented the abrupt and wide departure from that rule in 1793. But I will not look with an unavailing regret to what must now be considered as irrevocable. And I rejoice that our future adherence to that rule must be one of the many important consequences of a Legislative Union.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

THE Report made in the Irish House Commons in 1703, by the Committee on the State of the Nation, concluded with a resolution that Her Majesty be moved. “that through her favourable interposition her subjects of this kingdom may be relieved from the Calamities they now lie under, by a full enjoyment of their Constitution, or by a more firm Union with England.” This representation was voted by the House.

The Address of the Irish House of Lords, 1st October, 1703, concluded thus. “As we are sensible that our preservation is owing to our being united to the Crown of England, so we are convinced it would tend to our farther security and happiness, to have a more comprehensive and intire Union with that kingdom.”

The answers returned were in general terms, and not encouraging.

On the 4th March, 1704, the Speaker, in presenting the Bills, referred pointedly to the representation above-mentioned, as having had the unanimous voice and consent of a full House, and prayed the Lord-Lieutenant's support to carry it into execution.

On the 9th. July, 1707, the Irish Commons, in their Address to the Queen, entreated Her
“ to add greater lustre and strength to the
“ Crown, by a yet more comprehensive Union.”

The Address of the Irish House of Lords on the 15th July, 1707, was expressed in terms still stronger in favour of an Union.

No. 2.

*Extract from the Earl of Carlisle's Answer to the
Speaker of the House of Commons of Ireland, 17th
April, 1782.*

“ I request you to offer to that House,
“ where you so worthily preside, my most sin-
“ cere thanks for this mark of national appro-
“ bation. It is with cordial pleasure that I
“ shall ever reflect on the fortunate combination
“ of circumstances, if by them I have been
“ enabled to encourage the commercial in-
“ terests of the kingdom, to promote the great
“ improvements of this metropolis, to give a
“ new spring to public credit, to see the liberty
“ of the subject secured by law, to add weight
“ and dignity to the administration of justice,
“ conciliate to His Majesty's government, every
“ persuasion and description of men, and finally
“ to mature the means of uniting a loyal
“ people in general harmony and happiness.”

In the Year ending the 5th of January,
 ed and exported, with the Amount of
 exported; together with the Amount
 Cases distinguishing Ireland.

Import, & other	Total Value of Imports.
	£
250	5,275,805
257	41,637,835
587	46,963,230

exported.				
V. W. nuf	Value of all other Articles of Foreign Merchandise exported.	Total Value of Foreign Mer- chandise ex- ported.	Total Value of British and Fo- reign Merchan- dize exported.	Gross Revenue of Customs collected on Imports and Exports.
	£	£	£	£
Ireland	1,412,504	1,412,504	4,262,805	47,542
Other Parts.	12,187,323	12,975,285	43,737,251	6,857,293
Total.	13,599,827	14,387,889	48,000,056	6,899,835

NOTE—ceeding the 5th of January 1799,

Table

Table showing the results of the experiments conducted by the Committee on the subject of the influence of the position of the body on the rate of respiration. The experiments were conducted on a subject who was a healthy male of average build and age. The results are given in the following table.

Position of Body	Rate of Respiration (per minute)
Supine	16.5
Sitting	18.0
Standing	19.5
Walking	21.0
Running	24.0

Time of Day	Respiration				Pulse				Temperature
	Rate	Depth	Volume	Quality	Rate	Force	Quality	Quality	
7 A.M.	16.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	72	1.5	1.5	1.5	98.6
10 A.M.	18.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	78	1.5	1.5	1.5	98.6
1 P.M.	19.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	84	1.5	1.5	1.5	98.6
4 P.M.	21.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	90	1.5	1.5	1.5	98.6
7 P.M.	24.0	1.5	1.5	1.5	96	1.5	1.5	1.5	98.6

Notes.—The above figures are the results of the experiments conducted by the Committee on the subject of the influence of the position of the body on the rate of respiration. The experiments were conducted on a subject who was a healthy male of average build and age. The results are given in the following table.

No. 4.

ANNUAL AVERAGE of the Three Years preceding the 5th of January, 1799, of the true Value of the Products and Manufactures of IRELAND imported into GREAT BRITAIN : And also, of the Products and Manufactures of GREAT BRITAIN exported to IRELAND for the same Period, with the Balance in favour of IRELAND.

Value of the Products and Manufactures of Ireland imported into Great Britain.	Value of the Products and Manufactures of Great Britain exported to Ireland.	Excess of Balance in favour of Ireland.
£. 5,510,825	£. 2,087,672	£. 3,425,153

ANNUAL AVERAGE of the Three Years preceding the 5th of January, 1799, of the true Value of the IRISH Products and Manufactures, and of the Foreign Merchandize, annually imported into GREAT BRITAIN from IRELAND; likewise of BRITISH Products and Manufactures, and of Foreign Merchandize, exported from GREAT BRITAIN to IRELAND, for the same Period, with the Balance in Favour of IRELAND.

Total Value of Imports into Great Britain from Ireland.	Total Value of Exports from Great Britain to Ireland.	Excess or Balance in Favour of Ireland.
£. 5,612,689	£. 3,555,845	£. 2,056,844

AVERAGE ANNUAL AMOUNT

collected in IRELAND, on the Exports to
America, and all other Parts, of the principal
Articles in the Year ending

Duties collected on Goods Imported
exported to the States of America

Species of Goods.	Amount.
Inwards.	
Tobacco	3892
Other Articles	121
	4013
Outwards.	
Sundry Articles amounting	1
Total Inwards & Outwards 1798	4026
Ditto	1797
Ditto	1796
Annual medium in Irish Money	4026
Ditto in British Money	1797

AVERAGE ANNUAL AMOUNT in the Three Years preceding the 25th of March, 1798, of the Duties collected in IRELAND, on the EXPORTS from and IMPORTS into that Country, to and from the States of America, and all other Parts, other than Great Britain and her Dependences, distinguishing the principal Articles in the Year ending March, 1798.

Duties collected on Goods Imported from and exported to the States of America.		Duties collected on Goods imported from and exported to all other Foreign Parts.		Total Duties of Customs collected in Ireland, and the Trade with all Parts other than Great Britain and the British Colonies.
Species of Goods.	Amount of Duty.	Species of Goods.	Amount of Duty.	
Inwards.	£. s. d.	Inwards.	£. s. d.	
Tobacco	3929 19 2	Sugar, Muscov.	5264 4 7	
Other Articles	1210 17 2	Herrings	4242 5 0	
	4040 16 4	Salt	915 3 6	
		Wine, Port	3202 0 8	
		Spanish	4524 8 6	
		Wood, Deals	7420 5 2	
		Other Articles	11425 0 0	
		6 per Cent.	1680 0 0	
		Total	75550 14 0	
Outwards.		Outwards.		
Sundry Articles amounting	146 4 5	Butter	2130 0 0	
		Other Articles	259 12 0	
			345 1 0	
Total Inwards & Outwards	4040 16 4			
Ditto	1210 17 2			
Ditto	1729 13 2			
Annual medium in Irish Money	126 6 11			
Ditto in British Money	126 6 11			

AVERAGE ANNUAL AMOUNT, in the Three Years preceding the 25th March, 1760, of the Duties of Customs collected in IRELAND in her Commercial Intercourse with GREAT BRITAIN and the BRITISH COLONIES, distinguishing the Subsidies on Goods exported from the Duties collected on Foreign Merchandize Imported: Also, distinguishing Duties on Goods the Produce or Manufacture of Great Britain, from the Duties on Foreign Merchandize Imported through the Medium of Great Britain: Likewise the Total Amount of the Duties of Customs on all the other Branches of the Trade of Ireland.

AVERAGE ANNUAL AMOUNT, in the
distinguishing the Subsidies on Goods exported
Merchandize imported through the Mediums

Duties collected on British Manufactures imported
Ireland.

Species of Goods.	Rate of Duty.			Amount of collection
	£.	s.	d.	£.
Beer	0	4	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ per barr.	11,914
Coals	0	0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ } per ton.	23,389
— into Dublin	0	1	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ }	
Cottons.	Plain & colour'd	11	11 0 per cent.	12,357
	Calico, white	11	11 0 per cent.	
	— and		7 $\frac{3}{8}$ per yard	
	— colour'd	0	1 2 per yard	
	Muslin, white	11	11 0 per cent.	
	— and		7 $\frac{3}{8}$ per yard	
	— colour'd	11	11 0 per cent.	29,430
	— and		7 $\frac{3}{8}$ per yard	
Drapery, new	0	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ per yard	3,463
— old	0	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ per yard	
Earthen Ware	17	6	6 per cent.	3,011
Glass Bottles	0	0	11 per doz.	
— Cases	0	4	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ each	
— Plates & Ware	11	11	0 per cent.	4,139
Herrings	0	1	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ per barr.	
Hops	1	6	8 per cent.	27,435
Hosiery, Cott. Stock	11	11	0 per cent.	3,114
Iron and Hardware	11	11	0 per cent.	5,576
Salt, rock	3	0	0 per ton	21,438
— white	0	2	0 per bush.	11,401
Sugar, loaf	1	17	11 per cent.	18,321
Other articles				52,255
6 per Cent.				6,200
Total in the Year ending 29th March, 1798				233,549
Ditto 1797				199,745
Ditto 1796				197,917
Annual Medium in Irish Money				210,404
Ditto in British Money				194,219

AN ACCOUNT of the Quantity of the following ARTICLES exported from IRELAND to all Parts, distinguishing GREAT BRITAIN and her Dependencies from foreign Countries, in the Period of the Four Years preceding the War and of the Four last Years of the War.

FOUR YEARS PRECEDING THE WAR.				FOUR LAST YEARS OF THE WAR.			
	Great Britain and her Dependencies	Foreign Parts	Total.		Great Britain and her Dependencies	Foreign Parts	Total.
Bacon, Fitch	42,557	8,932	51,489	Bacon, Fitch	83,449	29	83,478
Beef, Barrel	91,803	31,179	122,982	Beef, Barrel	112,397	3,912	116,309
Butter, Cwt	236,980	71,554	308,534	Butter, Cwt.	263,878	44,786	308,664
Pork, Barrel	81,814	10,404	92,218	Pork, Barrel	132,646	9,431	142,077

ANNUAL Medium of the Number of BLACK CATTLE, and of SHEEP and LAMBS, sold at Smithfield-Market, in the Four Years preceding 1771, and the Four Years preceding 1799.

	Black Cattle	Sheep and Lambs
Annual Medium of the Four Years preceding 1771	85,682	664,135
Ditto Four Years preceding 1799	105,539	813,239
Average Annual Increase in Favour of the latter Period	19,857	149,104

No. 8.

AN ACCOUNT of the Quantity of the principal ARTICLES of IRISH Manufactures and Products exported from IRELAND to all parts, on an annual Medium of the Four Years preceding the 25th of March, 1798, distinguishing GREAT BRITAIN and her Dependencies in AMERICA and the WEST INDIES from Foreign Ports.

SPECIES OF GOODS.	To Great Britain	To the British Colonies and Islands in America and West Indies.	Total to Great Britain and the British Dependencies.	To the States of America.	To Foreign parts of Europe and Africa.	Total to Foreign Parts.	Total to all Parts.
Linen plain, per Yard	33,695,659	1,285,998	34,981,657	4,012,589	891,530	4,904,119	39,885,776
Linen Yarn, per Cwt.	16,876		16,876	3		3	16,879
Corn, Oats, per Quarter	500,273	1,234	501,507		120	120	501,627
Cows and Oxen, per No.	18,110		18,110				18,110
Hides, raw, per No.	47,888	477	48,365		320	320	48,685
Beef, per Barrel	88,544	23,853	112,397	849	2,992	3,841	116,238
Butter, per Cwt.	240,050	23,828	263,878	874	43,241	44,115	307,993
Pork, per Barrel	113,417	19,529	132,946	638	8,493	9,131	142,077
Bacon, per Flich	83,396	53	83,449		29	29	83,478
Provisions							

ANNUAL AVERAGE Value, in Irish Money, in the Three Years preceding the 25th of March 1798,
of the IMPORTS into, and EXPORTS from, IRELAND, to and from all Parts, agreeably to the Estimates of the Inspector-General's Books of that Country, distinguishing Great Britain and the British Colonies from other Countries.

IMPORTS.				EXPORTS.			
	British Products and Manufactures.		Foreign Merchandize.		Irish products and Manufactures.		Foreign Merchandize.
	£	s. d.			£	s. d.	
From Great Britain . . .	2,217,425	—	1,205,952	To Great Britain . . .	3,861,193	—	37,812
From British West Indies . .	—	—	116,405	To British West Indies . .	234,647	—	5,514
From British Cont. Colonies . .	—	—	6,980	To British Continent. Colonies	38,597	—	410
Total, Gt. Britain & Colonies	2,217,425	—	1,329,337	Total, Gt. Britain & Colonies	4,131,430	—	43,736
From States of America . .	—	—	190,339	To States of America . . .	329,107	—	3,295
From all other Parts . . .	—	—	560,711	To all other Parts . . .	182,242	—	1,624
Total, Foreign Part	—	—	751,050	Total, Foreign Parts	511,349	—	5,119
GRAND TOTAL	2,217,425	—	2,080,387	GRAND TOTAL	4,642,779	—	48,855

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

1. *SPEECH* of the Right Hon. *William Pitt*, in the House of Commons, Thursday, January 31st, 1799, on offering to the House the Resolutions which he proposed as the Basis of an *Union* between Great Britain and Ireland. *Seventh Edition.* Price 1s. 1d.

2. *Speech* of the Right Hon. *Henry Dundas*, in the House of Commons, Thursday, February 7th, 1799, on the subject of the *Legislative Union* with Ireland. *Third Edition.* Price 1s. 7½d.

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THE
S P E E C H
OF
L O R D M I N T O,
IN THE HOUSE OF PEERS,
APRIL 11, 1799,
ON A
MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS TO HIS MAJESTY,
TO COMMUNICATE
THE RESOLUTIONS
OF
THE TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,
RESPECTING
AN UNION
BETWEEN
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY JOHN EXSHAW, 98, GRAFTON-STREET

1799.

THE
S P E E C H,

Ec. Ec.

MY LORDS,

IN yielding to the desire, which it is natural for every publick man to feel, of delivering his sentiments on this great question, it could not be my intention, at any period of the discussion, to exhaust, or even to touch on all the many and various points of this comprehensive subject; and I must be yet less disposed to such an attempt in circumstances so little favourable as the present, I mean, after the talents, the learning and the eloquence of two countries have preceded me, and have, indeed, left little for such as me to glean, even in this vast and fertile field.

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I shall,

I shall, therefore, confine myself within bounds better suited to my own capacity, as well as to the measure of indulgence which I can have any pretensions to expect from your Lordships; and shall content myself with stating as clearly, but as shortly as I am able, a few thoughts on the principal and leading topicks of this argument, especially such as have made the strongest impression on my own judgment, and have had the greatest share in determining the opinion I profess in favour of the proposed measure.

In deliberating on this question, the first proposition which seems to impress itself on every mind, is the convenience, amounting indeed to a necessity, not merely for the advantage and benefit, but for the preservation and security of both countries, that there should subsist between Great Britain and Ireland, a close and intimate connexion of one description or other. The most disadvantageous situation in which either country can be placed, is that of total disconnexion. Indeed when I say disadvantageous, I certainly speak too feebly. I mean that this condition would expose both countries to the greatest quantity and variety of evil, and oppose the most insurmount-

surmountable barriers to national improvement and prosperity of any that can be imagined. Fundamental as this proposition will be found in the argument, it is nevertheless one on which it is unnecessary to dwell long. I find it, in the first place, conceded on all hands, and I think myself entitled to claim on this point a general or rather universal assent. For I presume it will hardly be required of me, that I should condescend to treat as an exception, worthy of notice, the opinions of those who call themselves United Irishmen, or of those other wretched men, whom the vigilance of Government and of Parliament, has lately exposed to the scorn and execration of a country which they disgrace, under the title of United Englishmen. These men may call themselves by what names they please, United Irish, or United English. In my language they can be known only by the appellation of French Irish, French English. They are merely partizans of the ancient and inveterate enemy of their country. They are wedded to the interests of that enemy, and enlisted under his standard. They are confederates in every desperate and wicked project of a foreign state, for the subjugation and ruin of their native land, and their opinions are entitled

precisely

precisely to the same degree of deference, that we should pay to the sentiments or wishes of the French Directory itself, on a question of British interest. I am, indeed, sorry to learn, that these extremes either of delusion or corruption, should exist in a single instance within the limits of this island: but since such men are, I cannot but observe with satisfaction their hostility to every species of connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, and most of all to that best and most perfect connexion which is now in contemplation. For when I learn from France, and her worthy Irish and English associates, that the present Union between England and Scotland stands in the way of their fraternal views towards Great Britain, and that the union with Ireland is a death's blow to their hopes of annihilating the British empire, I cannot but accept this testimony of the enemy, as the strongest and best confirmation of the favour which I profess, towards the measure which they oppose. But I shall not be expected to argue with this kind of adversary. We are engaged with them in a different sort of controversy, and it is the *ultima ratio* alone that can settle the debate between us. With this exception, however, the necessity of connexion is not only admitted,

ted, but warmly asserted by all those who have taken a part in the debate on this question of Union, whether their judgments have been favourable or adverse to the measure; and your Lordships know that there is no description of persons who have been more earnest to disclaim and abjure the character of what is called separatist, than those who have opposed the Union in Ireland, or in this country.

But if it were not admitted, this proposition is too obvious to require much argument to prove it. A glance on the map, and a moment's reflection will satisfy us, that the affairs and interests of these two sister islands are too much the same, in too many points of domestic and foreign concern, not to associate them necessarily in the dangers and business of war, and in the occupations and pursuits of peace. Let us suppose any one brought from another hemisphere, totally unacquainted, not only with the history and concerns, but even with the shape and form of this quarter of the globe, before whom a map of Europe should be laid for the first time; and let such a man be required to conjecture the distribution of
the

the different countries under his eye, into their respective states and governments. Whatever his opinion might be concerning other portions of Europe, I am persuaded we should all anticipate his confident judgment, that the British Isles, at least, formed one state. Let us, in effect, cast our own eye for an instant on this map—we shall see these two islands not merely contiguous, but lying as it were in the very bosom and embraces of each other—we shall observe, not only their mutual vicinity, but their insulation, and their insulation together, from the rest of Europe; we shall see their relative position with regard to each other and to every other part of the world, and especially their reciprocal dependence, for a secure and undisturbed navigation, in a great part of the circumference of both. These and a thousand other obvious particulars, which I do not enumerate merely to avoid abusing your indulgence with considerations familiar to us all, must convince us, that in a state of total political separation, there could hardly be a single transaction, or an instant of their existence, in which these two countries would not be rivals, and if rivals, enemies. It is easy to conceive the enhanced and aggravated state of warfare waged

waged in this manner between countries possessing each, in a greater degree, the means of offence, and in a less degree, those of defence, than in any other possible situation. We shall also recollect, that if one of these countries should be engaged in war with a third, as Great Britain with France, the other would present advantages to the enemy which it could not otherwise possess ; and it will not be difficult to foresee, that in a state of separation, the mutual jealousy and habitual animosity likely to prevail between the neighbours, aided by the intrigues and importunity of the enemy, will in all probability draw the neutral island into a direct or indirect participation in these hostilities. Thus will these two countries, instead of contributing to each other's comfort, security and greatness, as they might do under a wiser and happier system, only harass, enfeeble, and endanger each other, just in proportion to their respective means and resources, exhausting their mutual attention and energy, rather in watching and repressing each other, than in repelling common danger, promoting common interests, or exalting their common greatness and glory. Such a condition, in a word, disturbs the tran-

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quillity

quillity of peace, and shortens its duration, while it multiplies a thousand fold, the perils and evils of war. It is manifest that the smaller and weaker country of the two, must experience these disadvantages yet more sensibly than its powerful neighbour. In its differences with the other, if the aid and alliance of a third power be sought, that service must be purchased by some consideration or other; and we are taught, by reason as well as history the sort of price that is paid by an inferior, for the proud and politic protection of a powerful state. As the comparatively feeble and poor cannot discharge such a debt in positive force and wealth, it must give what it has, and pay its quota in general subserviency, that is to say, in a base and habitual dependence, little short, either in degradation or ruin, of positive subjection. It appears, in fine, to me, that a smaller country, situated between two great rivals, as Ireland is, can hardly hope for an interval of tranquillity, security or dignity. Dignity may at once be put out of the question, for having no real and positive force to support it, such a country must live, from day to day, by intrigue, the most degrading species of policy, and that which it seems the most impossible

possible to reconcile with any sense of national pride or honour. It can as little look for tranquillity or security ; for besides its own quarrels, the causes of which are infinitely multiplied, in a separate state, by that very vicinity which might, otherwise, extinguish them ; besides, I say, its own quarrels, it will be dragged perpetually into those of both its neighbours, and will indeed generally find itself the bone of contention, to be worried by both, and to endure therefore that double scourge, that complicated desolation and ruin, which fall on those unhappy countries that are themselves the theatre of wars, in which, perhaps, they have no interest, or none other than that of being themselves the prize to be fought for and destined to reward the conqueror, or purchase the peace of the vanquished. We shall perceive, on the other hand, with the same facility and with greater satisfaction, the inducements and advantages of connexion, by which the resources of the one, instead of being to be subtracted from those of the other, flow rather into a general stock, out of which, as from a common heart, strength and prosperity may circulate to the remotest extremities of both, and the right arm of the empire be nourished

and fortified, without impoverishing or withering the left. But I will not insist on this conceded point, and shall assume it as a thing proved for granted, that connexion is necessary for the mutual security and happiness of Great Britain and Ireland.

The question then arises, on the best and most eligible mode, or form of that connexion.

On this point also I have a settled opinion, which I consider as a main and principal hinge of this argument. I wish, indeed, to state and to argue it, in the first instance, as a general proposition, but if it be proved, and made out satisfactorily in that form, it seems decisive on that particular question, and will establish, on principle and reason, the same conclusion, to which our judgment may have been led on more practical grounds. The proposition then is this, that when two countries are so circumstanced as mutually to require connexion, the only mode of connexion which can perfectly remove the evils of separation, and fully confer the benefit of union, is a perfect identity and incorporation of their governments. All other relations of a more partial
and

and imperfect nature, are subject to many inconveniences while they subsist, and are besides of limited duration. By limited, I do not mean merely precarious. I consider their expiration not merely as possible or probable, but as certain ; and besides the perpetual and restless struggles, which are for ever vexing these contentious relations while they last, they appear to me to possess this fundamental and characteristic vice : I mean that of tending gradually, and though perhaps not always rapidly, yet certainly and inevitably, by the very law of their constitution and nature, to a total extinction and dissolution. Nations, then, connected in this manner, will necessarily arrive, at one period or other, at the alternative of separation, towards which they naturally tend, involving, probably, mutual and perpetual hostility, or that perfect incorporation and unity, which is productive not only of all the blessings of internal tranquillity, but of all the advantages, both in strength and prosperity, which flow from the union of their joint resources, and which are increased, by combination, far beyond the simple addition to their amount.

That such are the properties and defects of
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these imperfect connexions, we shall easily satisfy ourselves, by a very short and cursory view of one or two of the principal relations of that description, and I shall begin with that which I conceive to stand first, also, in chronological order—I mean conquest. For I believe it will generally be found, when two countries are situated in such a manner as to invite, by their local positions, a connexion between their governments, the stronger of the two, or that which is first enabled by an earlier civilization, and superior population, to aim at foreign enterprise, will attempt the conquest of the other, and if the attempt succeeds, that mode of relation is established between them, which I am now treating of. Conquest may, indeed, in one sense, be understood to express only the means employed for uniting them under one government, or bringing them together, and in that acceptation, conquest may, no doubt, lead to any mode of connexion, and, amongst the rest, may tend at once to that which is the most perfect and the best. Of this, indeed, history will furnish examples, though, I believe, not frequent; for war is but a rough courtship, and violence cannot be expected, in all cases, to procure so happy an union as that which, at once, incorporated the Roman and the Sabine people.

people. At present, however, I use the word conquest to express, not the means or instrument of union, but the relation which is the consequence of victory, and which subsists after it. In other words, I mean that dominion which is exercised by the conqueror on the title of conquest, while the countries continue distinct; or that sovereignty, which being founded by the sword, is measured by the power of enforcing it, on one hand, and the inability to resist, on the other. In comparing, as we are now doing, the advantages and disadvantages of the different kinds of connexion between nations, we may, no doubt, dismiss at once from the argument the consideration of conquest; for I presume we shall agree that this is the worst of all. It is, indeed, the most wretched condition of human slavery. The relation of master and servant, or even of master and slave, amongst individuals, or of sovereign and subject amongst the members of one commonwealth, even under the most despotick forms of government, may be conceived to produce, at least in some instances, or in some degree, a mutual benefit and convenience. But it is not so amongst nations. A master nation will, I think, generally be found a tyrant, and a subject nation is generally a slave. The submission
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and obedience of the one does not purchase protection or kindness, and the authority of the other yields little profit. The dominion of mere conquest, in a word, confers on the sovereign but a barren sceptre and a crown of thorns ; and very fit it should be so. Yet under all these discouragements it will generally be found, that a strong sense of the evils attending separation, stimulated perhaps by that passion, I mean ambition, which seems to actuate all governments, or those who administer them, will induce the stronger power to seek connexion by that course, unless precluded by the establishment of some better or less objectionable mode of relation.

Amongst these I shall next speak of federal connexion, and I am the more inclined to say a few words on that subject, as I have understood that, in the variety of opinions entertained on this question of Union with Ireland, some have been supposed to lean towards a connexion of that nature. I confess, however, that I can find nothing in that mode of relation to recommend it ; and every thing we know of such confederacies seems to prove them, in the first place, inadequate to the purposes of union,

union, and, in the next place, of very precarious duration. The fundamental vice of these federal constitutions seems to be, that professing to provide only for some common interests, they not only leave, but it is, in some sort, their spirit to establish, a distinctness, and even an opposition of interests on all or many other points. Speaking of national interests, I believe it will be safe to consider distinctness as in general but a convertible term for opposition ; and the different parts of a federal union are, I think, generally to be accounted rivals in respect of all in which they are distinct. Their opposition is indeed not limited even by that principle, but extends often to the very *casus fæderis*; I mean to those concerns which are common, and the general interest in which is meant to be provided for by the conditions and obligations of the union. It must be observed by every one who reads the history of such governments, that in the interpretation and performance of their federal engagements, the parties generally act in a spirit of rival and adverse contention. The passions of the multitude seem to flow naturally in that course ; and the narrow genius of those who will often have the lead in

the discordant counsels of such states, seems prone enough to fall in with this popular humour. We shall frequently observe them more occupied in the internal jealousies and competitions of the confederate states, than in promoting the common cause ; and especially in moments of common danger and exertion, they will often discover a greater apprehension of contributing a grain too much in the federal scale, than a grain too little for the success of that object, which is the only rational motive for exertion at all. They are, in a word, more afraid of giving some paltry advantage to a friend and associate, than solicitous to defeat the common enemy, or to provide for common safety. Irrational as this conduct is, I may appeal to observation and history for the existence as well as for the fatal effects of this mania, both in federal governments, and in the looser and yet more temporary and occasional confederacies of mere allies. We have ourselves lived in a very eventful period, and have had but too large an experience in revolutions of every sort. We have, amongst others, witnessed the recent downfall of a great federal government ; I mean the United Provinces : and I certainly agree with what I understood to be
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the sentiment of a noble Lord who opened this discussion on a former day, in thinking that the sudden and rapid overthrow of that government, and the degrading ruin and slavery into which that celebrated people has been plunged almost without a struggle, may be traced to the very vice and defect in the constitution of such governments which I have just described. It is surely reasonable to doubt, whether a more prompt and combined application of the resources which that country possessed, than, it seems, the distinctness and contrariety of its parts admitted of, might not have averted, at least the easy and inglorious conquest of a country, whose accidental and temporary union under the extraordinary talents of the great Prince of Orange, was able first to defy, and then to humble and defeat France, in the plenitude of Louis the Fourteenth's power and greatness. I shall probably not differ with many of your Lordships in ascribing, at least in part, to the same cause, the sudden calamities which have overwhelmed another brave and respectable people, I mean the Swiss cantons, with a rapidity and ease, which can be accounted for only on that principle. And I cannot suppress some apprehension that we may yet have to lament, even in our own day,

the dissolution of the grandest confederacy which the world ever knew, the integrity of which has already been too much broken not to excite anxiety and alarm for the issue, and on the stability of which, however, not only rests the safety and happiness of those extensive territories, and of the many nations which have hitherto found security and shelter under that great union, but I may say, perhaps, on which the independence and liberty of the whole of Europe, and a great proportion of the other three quarters of the globe, may essentially and eventually depend. I speak, my Lords, of the Germanic body itself. But I will dwell no longer on these unpleasant topics, not immediately applicable to the question of the day, and hasten to the consideration of that species of relation which is the proper subject of your present deliberation ; I mean that which now subsists between Great Britain and Ireland, and which did subsist between England and Scotland before the Union.

I am to speak now of those connexions which consist in some circumstance of identity, in the municipal constitutions of the two countries; that is to say, in having some
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part or member of their governments the same, with a distinctness and separate independence in all the rest. Such is that of one King or Executive Power, with separate legislatures ; and of this particular form of connexion we have undoubtedly had most experience in this empire, and can therefore speak of it with the best information and knowledge. I might, no doubt, safely appeal, at once, to that very experience, for the insufficiency of such a bond, to avoid the evils of distinct existence, or to confer, in peace or war, the full benefits of connexion. But I wish, first, to say a few words to what may be considered as the principle ; that is to say, to enquire what are the circumstances from which the evils of these partial relations may be thought to flow ; and above all, what is the true cause of that natural and constant tendency in such governments, to weaken and diminish the bonds of connexion, till it becomes little more than nominal, and remains, perhaps, only perceptible in the struggles and convulsions of its dissolution.

The first defect, then, which I remark in this mode of imperfect connexion, is similar, for perhaps I may say, precisely the same, with that
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which I have already observed upon, in relations merely federal. I mean that the connexion being but partial, and intended for partial purposes, the great mass of interests in each nation continue distinct; the attention of each country is still pointed towards a separate view of individual interest; and the public mind, if I may so express it, of the two nations, is kept distinct. I have already observed that distinct interests are generally opposite interests, or felt to be so by the two parties; and speaking of nations, I may add, that distinct minds are generally hostile. In these circumstances, the vicinity, and the connexion of such countries, instead of improving, as they might otherwise do, friendship and harmony between them, seem to produce the very opposite effects, and to cultivate a jealous and angry temper, prone to take offence and umbrage, and ripening every trivial discontent or difference into grounds of permanent alienation and even hostility.

Another grand source of indisposition between such countries, and that from which every one of the evils attending this mode of relation seems to me most immediately to derive, is the inequality in their relative power and influence, occasioned, no doubt, by their
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inequality in real and positive power and influence. It follows necessarily from the very nature and constitution of human affairs, and no artificial or conventional arrangement, no provisions of positive institution can alter it, that in the union of two distinct and unequal countries, the superior must be predominant, and the inferior subordinate in their common concerns, and in the administration of the common parts of their Government. Hence follows, however, a nominal independence in the inferior state, accompanied by a daily and irksome consciousness of real dependence and subordination. It is this contradiction between the real and nominal condition of the inferior country that I consider as the most fruitful source of those evils which afflict such connexions, and ultimately extinguish them. In Governments administered in this manner, under external influence, the eyes of the nation pass over the immediate and domestic instruments of their administration, to that which must appear to them, and may indeed be truly accounted its efficient head, I mean the external power which directs its counsels. It is therefore natural that the grievances, real or imaginary of such a country,

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try, should be laid to the account of that higher cause; that it's discontents, chagrins, and resentments should be directed against that object; and that the exertions of patriotism, or the struggles of faction, as the case may be, the clamour and the activity, the eloquence and even the virtues of popular leaders and ambitious men, should all aim at that obvious mark. They will find in the people a disposition, founded also in nature, extremely favourable to the success of such aims. I have said that the minds of two countries thus circumstanced are not only distinct, but hostile. Jealousy is the sentiment likely to prevail between them; and indeed where both being nominally, and according to their abstract rights, independent and equal, one of the two exercises, nevertheless, a clear and undisguised ascendancy over the other, jealousy may, in truth, be thought to have no very unreasonable foundation. The prevailing national sentiment, the ruling passion, then, of the inferior country, comes to be an angry, impatient and intolerant love of their independency. Whoever touches that string, reaches their heart, and commands their affections and actions. Hence we shall observe a
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restless and never satisfied struggling with every circumstance, either in the constitution of their government, or in the counsels and measures of their administration, which seems, even to the most subtle refinements of jealousy, to affect that object, hence a perpetual straining after its improvement and perfection; and hence also those impatient, and, surely, ungenerous advantages which are sought, in periods of common distress or danger, to extort concessions favourable to that object; concessions which do not excite gratitude in those who receive them, because they are claimed as rights and seem to have been enforced by necessity; concessions too which seem rather to whet than to satisfy the appetite that calls for them. Each victory of this kind becomes only a vantage ground from whence another may be sought for; and thus each succession of patriots, or of demagogues, seeking to enhance on the exploits of their predecessors, the improvement of independency is pushed forward until the true goal of that course comes in view.—I mean separation.

That separation is in truth the goal or winning post of this race of independency, must appear very clearly when we consider what

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the fundamental cause of the subordination complained of is, and what therefore must be the means of reducing it. The ascendancy of the superior country consists, no doubt, in it's superior power, but it is the constitutional connexion that furnishes the channel or organ, through which the power of the superior state is brought home to the inferior country. If they have the same executive power, the influence of the superior state operates through that channel on every branch and department of publick affairs. If their legislatures, distinct in other respects, have one branch or member in common, the legislation of the inferior is bent to uniformity with the other by that power. Connexion then is the means of ascendancy in one, and the cause of subordination in the other, and it is manifest that these grievances can be alleviated, or redressed, only by diminishing or abolishing the cause. That is to say, in other words, that independency can be improved only by striking off, link after link, of the connexion, and it's entire perfection can be attained only by breaking the last thread which holds the countries together.

From this account of the matter it appears unavoidable that the course I have described
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should be pursued in every similar case, and that these events are not to be considered as fortuitous, but as deriving from uniform and pregnant causes likely to produce the same consequences wherever they exist. We are taught, then, not less by reason, than, as we shall soon find, by experience, to expect that the natural and commendable love of independence on one hand, and the incompatibility of that independence with connexion on the other, should always lead two countries thus circumstanced to the last alternative, which I have already more than once alluded to, of separation or union; an alternative in which I am persuaded that true wisdom, and a sincere and genuine love of our country, will always make one choice, while passion and prejudice, especially private passion or prejudice, and while a blind and sophisticated pride, personating, or rather counterfeiting patriotism, may possibly prompt another.

If I have not been deceived by this reasoning, one might almost venture, without much temerity, to trace, as the pretty certain and uniform succession and progress of events, in the history of connexion between two neighbouring countries of unequal power, the

course I have just described. Their connexion will probably begin in conquest—that miserable condition will gradually soften itself into some mode of dependent connexion. This will still be refined into the more flattering condition of nominal independence, accompanied, however, by a real and inherent subordination;—under which the uneasiness of the subordinate country, and its growing pretensions and power, will advance in the progress towards real independence, till it approaches so closely the danger of separation, that both countries will be alarmed, and take shelter from the impending calamity, in the only sanctuary that remains, I mean Union. I will not say that every step in this progress will be the same in all cases. The events, such of them as happen, will probably succeed each other in the same order; but a link or two more may be found in some instances, and a link or two may be omitted in others. I think myself, however, supported not only by such reasoning as I have ventured to lay before you, but by the uniform testimony of history, at least in this observation; I mean that a partial connexion of Government, between two unequal countries, is not a permanent condition

tion in which they can settle, and is incapable of subsisting long without change; that it is not a stationary point, but merely transitory and progressive, and is but a stage or resting place, if that which I have described as constantly progressive can obtain the name of rest at all, between the original state of total disconnexion, from which they started, and either a return to that total separation again, or that which I consider as the more probable term of its Progress, even on the first approach of that evil, but is ultimately certain, I mean perfect and entire consolidation and union.

I profess myself so strongly impressed with this view, I will not say of the philosophical principal, but of history and experience applicable to the subject we are considering, that I cannot help looking to the union of Great Britain and Ireland, not merely as an advantageous and desirable event, and on that account likely to bring itself about, but as certain and unavoidable, although I shall take care not to commit my philosophy too rashly, by assigning any particular period, whether long or short, for the accomplishment of its predictions. I assert only that we are travelling that road. These two countries are visibly approaching each

each other by an irresistible attraction, by a species of gravitation which I consider as an invincible law of political nature, if nature can have such an epithet; and that closing, as it were, by the compulsion of this power, no human obstruction, no counterpoise that can be opposed to it, will long avail to keep them asunder, though it may retard their meeting for a while, I am not less persuaded that when once they are in contact, another principal, equally inherent in that new condition, I mean a principle of inseparable adhesion and tenacity, will hold them together, and will so cement and consolidate their union, as to render all human efforts to separate and tear them again asunder, vain and ineffectual. If these opinions then have any foundation, we may debate here concerning the best means of accelerating this happy and much to be desired event, but we may consider the event itself as perdestined; and I cannot help persuading myself that the species of destiny, of which I am here speaking, I mean the steady operation of fixed principles, will work out its own decrees, be the process longer or shorter; and neither that erroneous pride, which is supposed to pervade Ireland in general, nor the love of political monopoly, which may actuate particular classes

classes, or individuals of that country; nor the arts, the seductions, or the arms of the French Republick, can be long interposed between the cause and its effect, or disturb for ever the appointed order of human events, by constraining Great Britain and Ireland to endure the afflictions and calamities of seperation, or of a condition almost equivalent to it, while they contemplate all the blessings of Union placed within their reach, and courting their acceptance.

With this view of the necessity and inevitable nature of this event, the opinion I entertain of its utility is at least consoling to my own mind. Yet I should neither have hazarded such speculations, nor have presumed to detain your Lordships, especially so long, with this sort of reasoning, if I had thought it no better than idle and visionary theory. But, in truth, I was conscious that it was history rather than speculation that I was delivering throughout, and I will venture to say there is hardly a point or turn in this speculative course, which you will not find verified, chapter for chapter, by the history of every connexion we have hitherto known with the nations which now compose our empire.

Your

your Lordships will think me disposed to carry you far back, when I venture even to name the Saxon heptarchy, and the union of those seven independent kingdoms in the reign of Egbert. Yet if I do little more than allude to that signal event, it is not because I am wanting, or that I can think your Lordships so, in a due sense of its importance and dignity, or of its influence on the subsequent destinies either of England or of the world. It is enough to say that the union of the heptarchy was the birth day of nothing less than this very kingdom of England, and that the glorious empire which now extends from east to west, and has planted the dominion and the language of England around the globe, is the lineal descendant, or rather only the natural growth and developement of that event. It is not my intention, however, to dwell on this antient and parent union, for the purpose of illustrating the principles of which I have just treated. I am sensible that this period is too remote from our own, to build any solid conclusion on transactions, with the details and particulars of which we are so little acquainted. I therefore mention it only that I may be entitled to read a short passage from Mr. Hume's history of
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that period, which, I think, may furnish a reflection or two not impertinent to the present question.

“ The kingdoms of the heptarchy, though
 “ united by so recent a conquest, seemed to be
 “ so strongly cemented into one state under
 “ Egbert; and the inhabitants of the several
 “ provinces had lost all desire of revolting from
 “ that conqueror, or of restoring their independent
 “ Governments. Their language was every
 “ where nearly the same; their customs, laws,
 “ institutions, civil and religious; and as the
 “ race of their antient Kings was totally extinct
 “ in all their subjected states, the people
 “ readily transferred their allegiance to a Prince
 “ who seemed to merit it, by the splendour of
 “ his victories, the vigour of his administration,
 “ and the superior nobility of his birth.
 “ An union also in government opened to
 “ them the agreeable prospect of future tranquillity;
 “ and it appeared more probable,
 “ that they would thenceforth become terrible
 “ to their neighbours, than be exposed to
 “ their inroads and devastations.” We collect
 from this passage, not merely as an opinion
 of Mr. Hume’s, but as an historical fact,

that the local attachment and national feeling which the inhabitants of the several independent kingdoms before their union entertained, no doubt, towards their respective countries, were easily and quickly extended to the whole united kingdom. This change did not even wait for a new generation, but was operated in the very life of the conqueror, and therefore of those who were themselves habituated to the narrower feeling, and who had experienced in their own persons the humiliation and resentment belonging to defeat. For it is also remarkable that the harmonizing property of union was manifested in circumstances the most adverse of any to conciliation, I mean in the case of an union brought about by force, and attended with all the irritation of compulsion and conquest. We must observe, in the next place, that Mr. Hume considers a similarity of language, customs, laws, and institutions, civil and religious, as circumstances, favourable, not only to the establishment of union, but to the improvement and promotion of its beneficial consequences. And lastly, we have the authority of this profound and philosophical historian for thinking that such an union was likely not only

only to yield the comforts of internal tranquillity and peace, but so to improve the power and resources of the kingdom, as, instead of trembling at the approach of every invader, to render it rather itself an object of terror, or at least, of respect to surrounding nations. It is true that the Danish invasions followed immediately on this event, and we know that the repeated and powerful descents of that warlike nation, not only harrassed and alarmed this island upwards of a century, but at some periods reduced the Saxon power to the greatest possible straits. But in the first place, the Danish invasions were not the consequence of the union of the Heptarchy, and must have happened without it. And in the next place, it is impossible to read the history of that period without perceiving, in every page a demonstration of the salutary effects of that measure, and without ascribing to the union under Egbert, alone, the ultimate preservation of that kingdom. If the Danes had found the island in the same feeble and divided state, in which the Saxons had themselves achieved the conquest of the Britons; if they had had to contend only with the disjointed, disunited, and single exertions of the seven insignificant

States of the Heptarchy each in its turn, and if those Princes who fought for England had not been enabled by the union to oppose to this powerful and persevering enemy a combined and concerted defence, it is manifest that neither the valour and talents of Egbert, nor the almost romantick endowments and virtues of Alfred the Great, would have availed to prevent a conquest as complete, and an extirpation of the Saxon power and name out of England, as perfect and dreadful as that which they had themselves inflicted on the defenceless and divided Britons. But to pass forward to times somewhat nearer our own, I would now speak of Wales.

Wales had resisted the power of all the Saxon Kings, and the first Princes of the Norman line. It was not till the reign of Henry the Third, and then rather by the effect of internal dissention, than by the arms or enterprise of that Prince, that Wales was brought under a sort of feudal dependance on the Crown of England, and acknowledged the Sovereign of the latter country as a feudal superior. Wales was held, then, during that reign merely as a fief, with the usual acknowledgments,

ments, and under the usual conditions belonging to the feudal relation of feignory and vassalage, but without any claim on the part of England to political sovereignty. This slender relation seems, however, to have improved itself very rapidly into a connexion of a different and much more intimate nature, for in the very next reign, Edward the First, the immediate successor of Henry the Third, was able to convert that feudal seignury into direct and positive sovereignty, and to annex the Principality of Wales inseparably, and as part of the dominion of the Crown, to the throne of England. At the same period, and indeed on that occasion, a partial communication, and but a partial one, of the laws and police of England was made to Wales, by the *Statum Walliæ*, as it is called, in the twelfth year of the reign of Edward the First. I mention these particulars only to observe, that at this period commenced an æra of connexion between England and Wales, not indeed precisely the same in all points, but bearing, however, some resemblance and analogy to that which we are principally considering to-day. I mean an imperfect political connexion, which consisted in the two countries being governed by the same Prince.

Prince, with a partial uniformity of laws and institutions, remaining distinct and separate in other respects.

If we would appreciate the value of such a connexion, and its efficacy in producing either internal tranquility or external peace, we have only to pursue the history of that connexion, throughout the whole period of its duration, from the reign of Edward the First to that of Henry the Eighth. It is by no means my intention to interrupt this debate by such a narrative, but merely to direct your Lordship's attention to the result of such an enquiry. For your Lordships know that Wales was not only disquieted within, by the troubles and turbulence of civil disorder, but that both countries were afflicted by a perpetual succession of mutual inroads and petty warfare, not perhaps of sufficient dignity to attract the notice of general history, but sufficient to keep them both exposed to the frequent calamities, and the constant anxiety attending a state of permanent hostility with a neighbouring enemy, and by these means retard and interrupt on both sides of the border, but especially in Wales, the progress of civilization, of arts,
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of industry, of wealth, and, in a word, of public improvement in all its branches. But this was a state of things, which, as I have said, could not last for ever, and the only perfect and sovereign remedy for such disorders, was at length administered in the reign of Harry the Eighth, by that incorporating legislative Union which extinguished in a day the discord of ages, and identified forever these two not only distinct, but hostile nations. In our enquiry then concerning the comparative advantages or disadvantages of these two modes of relation, I mean that imperfect one which proposes to combine connexion with distinctness, and that perfect legislative Union which confounds and incorporates both the nations and their governments, we have only to compare, or rather to contrast, the uneasy and afflicting period which preceded the Union in the reign of Harry the Eighth, with the two centuries of mutual security and peace, and of progressive and still increasing prosperity and happiness, power, splendour and dignity which have succeeded, and as it is reasonable to conclude, have derived in a great degree, if not principally, from that event.

England

England felt very early the advantage of connexion with *Scotland*; and projects for uniting them, even on the best principle of Union, were set on foot, and repeated in various forms, and on the slightest prospects of success, from the earliest period down to the very latest, that is to say, to the actual accomplishment of that salutary design. But such purposes, wise and beneficial as they are, must, it seems, mature themselves in the fullness of time; and although it is ordained that these events shall happen, they must happen, it would seem, in their due and appointed order. It will be found, I believe, that neighbouring nations will seldom begin with union, though they are sure to end with it. The work of connexion commenced, then also, in this case, at the natural beginning of the process, and conquest was resorted to as the instrument of union. This part of the Scotch course, however, was never achieved. Scotland never was conquered. But the attempt, and all the miseries attending that long and obstinate struggle, deluged both countries in blood, and during more than three centuries afflicted them with calamities, the amount of which, on either side,

historians

historians can hardly report faithfully, without the charge of exaggeration. This sanguinary and ruinous contest terminated in the Union of the Crowns, at the accession of James the first; and here commenced a century of that precise relation which is the subject of our present enquiry. The two kingdoms had one Prince, and one Executive Power, with separate Parliaments. Scotland asserted a perfect independence and equality, but experienced a real subordination. It would, undoubtedly, be unfair, if I were to impute to this cause alone, the many disadvantages under which Scotland appears to have laboured, and the declining condition of that country which is observed by historians during the period I have mentioned. Much of the calamity which fell upon both kingdoms, must be placed to the account of the troubles and civil wars to which every part of the island partook during a great proportion of the last century, and which, amongst other extraordinary events produced, under the Commonwealth, a hasty and short-lived, because ill digested and ill conceived, Union of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. But with all these allowances, it is not the less true, that the last

century was a period of great political discord and diffention between England and Scotland, in which the latter country entertained and manifested, as we have been led to expect, that angry and querulous temper which I have described as growing out of the situation, and as inseparable from that jarring and abhorrent union of nominal independence and real subordination. This cause produced its natural effects, and both disturbed the empire in peace, and weakened it in war, sometimes by political contention between the people of Scotland and the Monarch, sometimes by the habitual animosity of the two countries, hardly kept under by the authority or mediation of the common sovereign, sometimes by the intrigues of Scotland with France, and above all by the pursuit of the idol independence, to the very brink of separation. The very unity of the Crowns became a grievance; and your Lordships know, that towards the close of this period, I mean in the first years of the reign of Queen Anne and of the present century, partly by projects for abridging the prerogative, because it was administered out of Scotland, partly by projects for usurping a considerable portion of the regal power, in order that it
might

might be administered within Scotland; partly, in fine, by refusing to accede to the settlement of the succession adopted in England, the Parliament of Scotland, the patriots of Scotland, with the acclamation of the whole people of Scotland, brought the danger of impending separation so home to the sense and bosoms of both countries, that their prudence was at length alarmed; they opened their arms to each other, and took shelter from imminent and incurable ruin, in that inseparable embrace which has ever since, and I trust ever will, continue to unite us. It is thus that extremes touch, and thus that these two nations, from the last term of alienation and repugnance, passed at a single step, into the closest and most indissoluble union.

The connexion between England and Ireland began in conquest, and the relation was that of sovereign and subject. I do not say a sovereign able, at all times, to enforce his dominion, or a submissive subject acknowledging and acquiescing under the authority of his master. But whatever connexion subsisted between the two countries, had that ori-

gin and preserved that character through its first period. This first and intolerable stage of national relation passed forward, however, and softened itself gradually, but through the sanguinary process of habitual resistance and insubordination, swelling occasionally into civil wars and rebellions of the most ferocious character, into a dependent connexion, or a mitigated but avowed dependence of Ireland on England. I allude now to that period during which the Irish nation, with a parliament of their own, were, however, subject to the legislature of England. I do not speak of the *right*, nor wish to engage in that already obsolete, though recent controversy. I speak only of the *fact*, for such was the constitution, *de facto*, of English and Irish connexion, in the memory of the youngest of your Lordships. This second period, also, passed away, and the present improved state of Irish independence, as it now subsists, was atchieved by means, which I have already had occasion to allude to; I mean by the opportune exertion of Irish energy in moments of British debility and distress. For those concessions were certainly granted in circumstances of distress, whether they may now, with better grace, be stated to have

have flowed from the justice and liberal disposition of the conceding country, or not. In the mean while we have arrived, in the due and regular course, at that precise point of connexion, which has been the principal object of discussion. We have a common prince, with separate parliaments. Ireland claims a sovereign independent government, and that claim is freely admitted by our own; while we exercise, nevertheless, with the acquiescence of Ireland, an open ascendancy and controul in every one of its concerns. We are at this moment, therefore, making an experiment, which is not yet twenty years old, of the mutual advantages to be derived from that mode of connexion, of its efficacy in strengthening the empire, in repelling danger from without, in reconciling the minds and affections of the nations within, and, finally, in cementing and perpetuating their union. We must, indeed, regard the present moment as the first, in which the course of events has furnished the proper ordeal of this condition; I mean a crisis of difficulty and danger to the empire; for this is the true touchstone on which the virtue of connexion and of mutual engagements may be proved. Surely, my
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Lords, at this period of the argument, I may claim the benefit of facts; of which we are ourselves the living witnesses, and appeal at once to the disastrous testimony of the present hour, not only for the inadequacy of such a system to yield protection and support in the period of difficulty, but for its active and fatal efficacy in augmenting the danger and hastening the common ruin. Can we need better proof than every tide has of late brought us, that the present feeble and flimsy bond which connects Great Britain with Ireland, does not possess one principle of stability, and has not stamina to resist that innate tendency to decay and dissolution, which accompanies all life from the cradle, whether natural or politick. What result then is it reasonable to look for from this experiment? I should wish to speak on this occasion, not merely with respect, but I must say, with gratitude and reverence, of the conduct held by that which we must call the Irish nation, and which is, indeed, entitled to that appellation. I mean the Irish Government, the Irish Parliament, a great portion of the property of Ireland, of its gentry, and even of its people. In these we have witnessed exertions of courage, activity, perseverance, and spirit,

spirit, as well as of fidelity and honour, in fulfilling the engagements of their connexion with us, and in the protection and defence of their own country, which challenge the thanks of Great Britain, and the approbation of the world. But this sentiment cannot either conceal from us, or disguise other truths, not less obvious, though less grateful and welcome. The loyalty, the prudence, and spirit, which we commend, on one hand, do not, however, prevent an extensive and desperate conspiracy, on the other, against the common safety of Great Britain and Ireland, and aiming, above all, avowedly and distinctly against that connexion, in which the safety of both is felt to reside. After hearing his Majesty's lawful exercise of the powers with which the Constitution of Ireland has invested him, and the legitimate means employed by the Sovereign of that country to preserve a uniformity of measures in the direction of our common interests, treated as the interference of a foreign power, we have the misfortune of seeing at this hour a great portion of the Irish people, considerable for its numbers, and, I fear, not altogether contemptible, even for its blood and talents, in open rebellion against our common Sovereign,

reign, and in close alliance with our common enemy. The dissolution of all connexion between us is the object they profess. The grievance which they have risen to redress is that connexion; the cause which their manifestos proclaim, the standard under which they muster and fight, is separation. This end then, towards which we have seen such connexions are continually prone, this very separation, which is the natural inborn propensity of imperfect relation, is already, in this case, the subject of a civil war, and is at this moment committed to the issue of arms, which is still depending. I have glanced, in this manner, the history of British and Irish connexion only to shew, that amongst its many other evils, that of tendency to total extinction, which we have been taught by principle, and by the example of other countries, to expect, is proved in fact, and in the actual case, to be one of its properties; and I am hardly apprehensive of a dissenting voice to the conclusion which appears to me to result from this deduction, whether of history or reason, that we have reached the point at which, in the first place, the evils of imperfect connexion are at their height, and in the next, beyond which lies only that alternative,

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so often mentioned, of separation or union. We stand precisely in that predicament, in which the prudence of both countries, and the fidelity and honour of those who are entrusted with their interests, I mean their Governments and Legislatures, are called upon by the most solemn and instant appeal, I mean the peril of their countries, to snatch them from that precipice, on the very edge of which they stand, already wavering, and too giddy to save themselves. It cannot, surely, be a difficult or doubtful question, whether we should fold our arms, and look on upon this danger, and the certain ruin in which it ends, or follow that secure and already trodden path which has already conducted two other countries, now identified with England, I mean Wales and Scotland, to more than safety. We have surely learnt from both those examples, that the measure adopted by them, not only affords a perfect remedy against the evils with which we are now contending, but possesses precisely the opposite property from that which is the character of our present imperfect, ill-constructed connexion; namely, that of tending to a constant and certain improvement and perfection, instead of diminution and

deterioration of union and all its beneficial fruits.

Having hitherto treated the question somewhat speculatively, I would now speak more particularly to the practical inducements which should recommend this measure to both countries; and, first, to Great Britain.

The advantages to be derived to Great Britain from an incorporating union with Ireland may be divided into positive and negative.

By positive, I mean an accession of real and efficient force to our present Empire, as a naval and military power; for were all cause of difference between the countries extinguished, and were the affections of the whole of Ireland as sincerely directed towards the general service of the Empire, and its force as disposable for that purpose, as may be said of every part of Great Britain, it cannot be doubted that the power and resources of that Empire would receive an essential augmentation and improvement. But I would rather pass on to that class of advantage which I have called negative, and which appears to me the most material of the two.

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By the negative advantage of union, I mean that of avoiding, in moments of war and difficulty, those embarrassments which have never failed to distract and annoy us as often, at least of late years, as war and difficulty have occurred, and which render Ireland, at this moment, instead of a resource, only a dead weight hung round the neck of British exertion, at a time when the full energy of both might be well employed against the common enemy. The case is such, that we have not only to contend with this difficulty in our contest with France, but it must, I think, be an improvident and sanguine view of our own affairs, and of the general events in Europe, to consider even the preservation of Ireland, I mean her preservation to the paternal government of his Majesty, and the continuance of any connexion between us, as a matter which is not become, in some degree or other, problematical and precarious. I would by no means be understood to speak despondently on that subject; I am far from feeling so. I speak only of danger and doubt, as exciting a prudent exertion to counteract them, not of a mean or unprofitable fear. No man in England can repose a more entire confidence in

the vigilance, the skill and the divine valour of the British navy than myself. I profess an equal reliance on the courage and discipline of British troops, endowed as I have always thought them with higher excellence than those of any other nation in the world. I have a firm confidence also in the spirit and bravery of the Irish nation, and in the honour and fidelity of that part of it which professes attachment to our empire, and to our mutual connexion; but with all these grounds of rational hope and expectation, there are two points in which I cannot feel the same implicit confidence, on each of which, however, our ultimate security, and the issue of this contest must depend. I cannot rely confidently on the constancy of fortune in war; nor on the steadiness and uniformity of any national sentiment whatever. I do not know why there is a rebellion in Ireland at all. I have never heard any adequate cause assigned for it. Such pretences as have been resorted to for justifying it, have either been posterior to the events of which they are alleged to have been the causes; or utterly irreconcilable with the avowed objects of the rebellion. Who for example will believe those
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men sincere who would ascribe their insurrection to the religious differences between two sects of christians, while they propose to redress that grievance, by a remedy, the success of which must eradicate from their country, or subject to a furious and fanatic persecution, the profession of christianity itself? I have never, I say, heard any distinct grievance articulated, which would not be enhanced a thousand fold, by the most perfect success that can be proposed in the acknowledged objects of this absurd rebellion. Not knowing then the principle of the present troubles in Ireland, I have no rule for measuring their extent, or for limiting their progress, and I cannot say with confidence, whether any part of the Irish nation, or at least the greater and predominant part, will at some future period even profess adherence to British connexion; neither am I endowed with the means of predicting positively the event of another enterprise against Ireland, if the enemy should attempt it in more favourable circumstances. I repeat it, my Lords, I do not despond on this view of the danger; I say on the contrary that the proper means are sure to repel it. I speak only of the danger as of a motive for
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exerting both wisdom and courage in opposing it. In that view I am constrained to acknowledge doubt, and doubt on such a question cannot be divested of anxiety, nor separated from a duty to aim at the attainment of better security for objects of such unappreciable value. I do not say Ireland must be lost if we have not a Union, but I cannot say less than this, that we have no security for the preservation of Ireland, if we do not draw the bonds of our connexion much closer, and that without delay. With such apprehensions it cannot be unseasonable to contemplate a little more closely, the consequences of a total separation from Ireland, and of the necessary attendant, at least, in the present moment, on such a rupture, I mean her immediate alliance with the French Republic. Momentous as these consequences are, I shall pass rapidly over them, because they are too obvious, and their importance too sensible, to require, or, perhaps, admit of amplification.

An Irish democratic republic, or rather anarchy, must be the first and instant consequence of our separation. Let any man, then, attached to the British Constitution; let any one who is
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fond of order and security in society, or even afraid of the extremes of disorder; let any one who would shrink from universal plunder, confiscation and murder, with all the nameless miseries, wretchedness and guilt, which are but the particulars of that aggregate called anarchy; let any man, I say, who has either the slightest concern for the human race and its happiness, a spark of love for his country, or even a common and vulgar solicitude for his own or his childrens' security, reflect for a moment on the triumphant establishment of a democratic anarchy in Ireland. It is not enough to say "*Proximus ardet*;" it is part of our own tenement which is in flames, and we come in absolute contact with this pestilent contagion. Let us, I say, consider soberly, if you please, but deeply and seriously, how much this danger would be increased by such an event, and what the nature of the danger is. I will not insist on this topic; it might lead me too far. But I shall pass to consequences of another sort.

Let us consider, for example, what would be the situation of the western coasts of this island, from the Land's-end to the Hebrides. Let

ask Cornwall, Devonshire, Bristol, Wales, Liverpool, Lancashire, Glasgow; let us ask those whose houses now stand on the margin of the Irish Channel, whose lawns and gardens are washed by that sea, which now separates them only from friends; let us ask those manufacturing coasts and counties, and those great trading cities which I have enumerated, and which now draw wealth and profit, without danger, from that channel, what their condition and that of their country will be, when they stand within hail of a powerful and savage enemy, which the darkness of a single night can bring to their chamber doors. At present the British commerce and the British navy pass freely through this channel, with friendly ports and coasts on either side, as if it were an inland navigation; while the ships of the enemy cannot approach, nor entangle themselves either for war or trade, with this maritime pass. But after such a change, when Ireland is hostile, and in the hands of an enemy, let those who direct our naval affairs, and who, I will take this opportunity of saying it, do so with so much honour to themselves, and so much solid advantage, as well as glory, to their country; let

let those who are best acquainted with our maritime situation, declare, what new exertion of vigilance will be required, what additional number of ships and of seamen must be retained from offensive war, and must abandon the ocean, to protect the coasts of Great Britain against those of Ireland, and to watch the ports of the latter country in its whole circumference. Let us reflect on the advantage lost to the British navy and its operations, by exclusion from Cork, and from the southern and western harbours of Ireland; let that disadvantage be only doubled by adding our loss to the gain of the enemy, when they have all the ports and bays of Ireland at their disposal or in their occupation. How many squadrons more must we employ to tend at once the armaments of Brest and L'Orient, and those of Ireland. What will be the situation of our channel and our western trade, when enemies' cruizers issue from and shelter in France to the southward, and Ireland to the northward, and far to the westward of the entrance of our channel. The Victualling Board will tell us how the navy will be supplied, when Cork is shut against us, and victuals only the Brest squadrons. When the ports of Ireland are all

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French, will it be equally impossible to transport troops from France, as when those troops were to fight their way on shore, and the ships, which transported and convoyed them were to fight their way back to France? When a French and Irish army, receiving their orders from the French Directory, are at Belfast, and ready to embark within three hours sail of the British coast, will invasion be as chimerical and visionary as it now is from France to the southern counties of England? Will in fine internal discontent, or speculative error, or the secret machinations of French corruption and English treason, or will popular hope in the first sweets of disorder and anarchy have less, or will they not have much more heart and confidence, when with the example of a successful rebellion, they have also the support of neighbouring armies to encourage them?

These are some, far from all, it would be difficult to enumerate thus suddenly all the consequences of Irish separation from Great Britain, and connexion with France, as it would affect ourselves. I am far from saying, I will never admit that even these accumulated difficulties,

difficulties, would prove too many for the hitherto unmatched powers of British energy or wisdom. But I say the change would be great, the danger as yet untried, and the issue more doubtful than our prudence as Englishmen, and much more, our duty as entrusted with the interests of our country, should permit us to expose it to, if the trial can be averted by any honourable means. It appears to me the greatest peril to which the British Empire, whether we consider its power and greatness without, or its security, freedom, and independence within, ever was or can be exposed. On the question, therefore, as it regards Great Britain, I have no hesitation in assenting to the measure, and concurring in this address.

This consideration might, perhaps, be thought in strictness sufficient for the attention of this Parliament, since the Parliament of Ireland is no doubt competent to deliberate and decide on all that regards the interest of Ireland in this question. No man is less disposed than I am, to controvert the concurrent competence of the Irish Parliament to deliberate, and its exclusive competence to decide

the question as it regards Ireland. I must, nevertheless, think the interest of Ireland in this measure, a very material point in the deliberation of the British Parliament also. For although an entire union with that country appears to be desirable on a separate view of British interest; yet it would, in my opinion, cease to be so, if it were not advantageous to Ireland also. The benefit must be mutual in this mutual transaction, in order to be enjoyed by either. The evils attending separation would not be removed, but on the contrary would in my judgment, be much enhanced, by any measure which should unite us at the expence, or to the essential prejudice of either. If sincere and cordial harmony is not the fruit of union; if identity in constitution is not founded on identity of interest, and is not followed by identity of sentiment and feeling towards the united empire, such an union will not cure the evils of imperfect relation, or even separation, but may bring some of them nearer and more home to both; and will produce but few of those advantages which I consider as the true inducements to that measure. I claim it, therefore, as an English question, to enquire whether Union with Great Britain will

will be beneficial to Ireland; and I should propose to pursue that enquiry not for the purpose of instructing Ireland in her own interests or duties, but for that of informing ourselves of the interest of our own country in this measure, and resting the judgment of the British Parliament, if it should be favourable to it, on the only solid and secure basis, of mutual and reciprocal advantage.

I am, therefore, to consider the consequences which would result to Ireland, from that situation of which I have already described some of the consequences to England; I mean a total separation from Great Britain, and alliance with the French Republic. I have already assumed as the first fruit of this event, or probably as either preceding or accompanying it, the abolition, in all its parts, of the present constitution of Ireland, the zealous attachment to which is opposed to all the advantages of Union, and the establishment on its ruins, of an Irish Republic on the French model. This change and all the complicated calamity it bears *in gremio*, I consider as more fatal than all the rest to the happiness of Ireland; but I will rather postpone its consideration

sideration for a moment, and advert to the other less important, indeed, but yet serious effects of such a revolution. It implies then, in the first place, a state of open hostility to England; and this warfare must in all probability partake of the nature of civil war. For it cannot be imagined, that Ireland should be unanimous in surrendering a free Government and embracing French chains; nor in preferring that abhord compound of guilt and madness, of infamy and ruin, to the blessings of religion, law, honour, security, and genuine freedom; nor is it imaginable that Ireland will be unanimous in rejecting British connexion for the purpose of fraternizing with France. The event which I have supposed, I have supposed to be the issue of war, in which one party in Ireland, now the strongest, and I trust the most numerous, has been subdued. But submission to force does not change the mind; and were such a calamity to befall Ireland, the new Irish Directory will find that the armies of England, when employed in the rescue of Ireland from that slavery, will be seconded by a great and powerful portion of their subjects. Ireland then is doomed in this event, to foreign and internal war, with all its complicated

complicated miseries, of which the bitterness is indeed, yet on the palate of that unhappy country. I have already spoken of the disadvantages to which even England would be subjected from the hostility of Ireland. It is manifest that the country which is the least powerful on shore, and is null at sea, must labour under the same disadvantage multiplied in an infinite degree. A French army in Ireland is the natural consequence of this state of things: if that army is weak, it cannot protect them; if it is strong and adequate to the objects of France in sending it, as assuredly it will be. Ireland becomes a miserable province of France. But Ireland as a separate state, must alone provide for all the imperial establishments to which she now contributes but a part. Ireland must have an army all her own, and she will find she must subsidize her allied army, not by treaty only, but by requisition and contribution, and every other form of exaction and extortion, limited by the modesty of the French Directors, their Generals, and all their subordinate officers of plunder. They must have fortified towns, and all the establishments of that costly branch of defence. They must have a navy, build ships, maintain
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arsenals and dock-yards, supply their navy with stores and provisions, and they must man and pay their fleets, all from their own funds and resources. Have the œconomists of Ireland computed the price of these imperial honours, if indeed, they can be borne at all? But let them consider, whether the insulated trade and wealth of Ireland will furnish either men or money for such demands, even after the people should have so far belied all the experience which the world has had of them, by submitting with perfect obedience to the utmost exactions that can be laid upon them. It would after all be worthy of a moment's reflexion, whether if Ireland should not suddenly accomplish that which France, Spain, and Holland, seconded by an armed neutrality of the maritime powers of the North; that is to say, what the whole naval world have tried in vain, I mean should not suddenly acquire a superiority at sea over Great Britain, whether her commerce and every hope which her insular situation could suggest or realize, must not be held by sufferance, and at the mercy of that powerful and offended neighbour, to whom nature had allied her, but whose generous offer of an equal and honourable participation

pation in power, prosperity and happiness she had rejected with insult, as if it had been an injury. Ireland will, no doubt, not expect after her separation from England, and alliance with our enemies, to partake freely in our East India or our colonial trade; nor will she expect of England in those circumstances, the great and liberal sacrifices which she now makes to the support and promotion of Irish industry, with the amount and particulars of which a noble Lord has just made us acquainted; sacrifices which, however liberal in their extent, and however beneficial to Ireland in their effect, I consider only as a natural indulgence of fraternal affection, as well as a wise exertion of imperial policy, while we are united; but which must of necessity expire with our connexion. Will the trade of France, or the share of it to which they would be admitted, and the conditions of its tenure, compensate this loss? Will restraints and prohibitions on the commercial intercourse between England and Ireland be no loss to the latter country? The papers on your Lordships' table will instruct us on that point.

The considerations which I have already enumerated are of no light or trivial import ; but I must now set before the eyes of Irish gentlemen, one inseparable consequence of such a revolution, and one of which they are no doubt aware. I mean the expulsion and confiscation, not to say the blood of those who now support their antient connexion with England ; and whom the case I have stated supposes to have been defeated. But will confiscation and murder go no deeper even than this ? In the savage triumph of democratical anarchy, will not every friend to the established constitution of Ireland, to the authority of law, or even to the moral restraints of virtue and religion, will not every one who is guilty of that unpardonable irremissible crime, the possession of property, real or personal, great or small, will not in a word all those whose situation seems to offer either a lure, or a curb to violence, be involved in that undistinguishing massacre and pillage which sweeps the way before and bears up the train of such revolutions ? I must indeed put it, my Lords, seriously and earnestly, not as a topic of declamation, or false and artificial feeling, but as furnishing

nishing the foundest argument, and exciting the warmest solicitude, to the property, and I may say to the industry, and to the virtue of Ireland, without distinction of degree, or of religious persuasion, what would be the consequence of a complete victory obtained by France in Ireland, what would be the inevitable consequence of delivering Ireland, with all her political, religious and civil interests, over to the discretion of that description of Irishmen who would then become their masters. and of that description of anarchy which must follow such events as I have described. - I choose rather to hint at than to dwell on such topics. They are indeed fitter for the private meditation of those who are concerned in them, than for a public discussion or rhetorical amplification. I am content with having stated shortly and dispassionately the nature and degree of some of those dangers which may induce England to consent to Union, but which seem to command Ireland, with the authority of urgent and instant necessity, to seek without delay, the refuge which this measure presents to her.

It is impossible to overlook some circumstances in the internal and political condition of Ireland, which bear as powerfully on the question of Union, and seem to recommend that measure to the people of Ireland, as strongly for the purposes of equal government, and of civil and municipal happiness, as on any other grounds whatever. Ireland is a divided country, but unequally divided as to property and numbers; the least numerous class possessing the property and the power; but the most numerous entertaining, and indeed cherishing fondly, and tenaciously, claims on both, I mean both on the property and the power. I need not detain your Lordships by describing the extent or the violence of those passions which inflame and exasperate both parts of the Irish nation against each other. Every one knows the firm and immoveable basis on which their mutual hatred stands, the irreconcilable nature of its motives, its bitter, malignant, and implacable character. In this frame and temper of mind, however, towards each other, one of these portions of Ireland claims and exercises what is felt by both, to be a species of dominion over the
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other. I believe it is hardly too much to say, that there are two nations in Ireland; two Irish peoples; the one sovereign, the other subject. The sovereign class, or cast of Irishmen, claim their sovereignty as of right, and ground it on an old title of conquest, confirmed, as they contend, by possession, acquiescence, and prescription. They claim also the federal support of Great Britain in maintaining this dominion, on the solemn grounds of fidelity to implied compact, compensation for sacrifices, and reward for services. They shew a close alliance and identity of views between themselves and the English interest in Ireland in all times, and they rely as strongly on recent, and even on present exertions in a common cause, as on the uniform tenour of their ancient services. In a word, they call at once upon our honour and our gratitude, and they support that appeal by a stream and series of facts which we cannot controvert. I must confess that I have always felt this point as constituting a true and proper dilemma—on the one hand, I cannot admit the ascendancy of one part of a nation, over another part of the same nation, to the extent and to the purpose claimed in Ireland, as capable of
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assuming any character deserving the denomination of right. That which is a wrong on one side, cannot, intelligibly to me, become a right in the other. Wrong is not a material out of which it appears possible to construct right; and I do not think the virtues of possession, prescription, or any other limitation of time, which are supposed to cure the vices of a bad title, at all applicable to the case of perpetually subsisting, and, as it were, renovating wrongs, especially such as affect the political rights of great numbers of men. The operation of prescription in confirming titles, even in the private transactions of property, is, indeed, different, I believe, from the common notion that is formed of it. Prescription does not cure the original vice of a bad title; but, after all memory of the good title, which had been supplanted by the usurped one, has been lost and buried under the oblivion of time, prescription, that is to say, the lapse of time within which legal memory can survive, determines the expiration of the old title and gives effect, not to the bad one which first superseded it, but to a new title arising out of possession, and consummated in this manner by the completion of prescriptive time.

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Nothing of this applies to subsisting and continuing wrongs, in which the length of their duration, and the frequency of their repetition, instead of diminishing the injury, must be felt to be a grievous aggravation, and instead of converting wrong into right, seems only to improve and fortify the title of those who suffer, to shake off the injury on the first opportunity that offers. If possession then will not constitute this singular right which is claimed in wrong, as between the parties themselves, neither can it be improved by the interests, the engagements, or the obligations of a third party: and I do not see how the *jus tertii*, as it may be called, of England, can affect the relative claims of these two Irish nations, or of these two parts of the Irish nation. On this ground, therefore, and merely on this general and abstract view of the question, I confess I might have thought it difficult to assign a sufficient reason to preclude his Majesty as Sovereign of Ireland, from concurring with his Irish Parliament, or even from exerting, in every lawful way, his legitimate powers in promoting such measures as might be calculated to place every class of his Irish subjects on an equal footing, as to civil rights,

rights, and consolidate these two hostile nations into one peaceable and united family.— But in truth your Lordships know that nothing can be less rational, nor more dangerous, and often fatal than these abstract views of practical questions, affecting the interests of multitudes and of nations. In the blind pursuit of abstract right, we shall often find ourselves, innocently no doubt, if our intention be considered, but yet too effectually, the instruments of great practical injustice and oppression. I believe there are few cases to which this observation applies more closely, than to that which we are considering.—That part of Ireland which we would wish to redress, claim not only political equality in the Government of their country, a claim in which I confess I cannot help sympathizing with them; but they are known to entertain, and to nourish yet more fondly and anxiously, though perhaps not yet so loudly or distinctly pronounced, claims of a very different nature. We cannot be ignorant that the first application of those rights with which we should be disposed to invest them, is likely to be the perpetration of a great wrong, and that at bottom, that wrong was, perhaps, the true and eventual object of their

their actual demand, and would be the practical result of its attainment. The Catholics of Ireland not only claim a participation in the civil franchises enjoyed by their Protestant countrymen ; but they foster claims on the *property* of Protestants, the present possession of which they treat as mere usurpation, and these claims are of no trifling extent. We know the aspiring character of their church, or if you please, of all churches, or of all bodies and descriptions of men. We must, above all, recollect what is perhaps more urgent than all the rest, that the Catholics, besides their claims, civil or religious, have passions to gratify, passions long irritated, long restrained, but not on that account the less vehement, or dangerous. I have heard such apprehensions treated lightly, as the productions either of imagination or ignorance ; and I certainly pretend to no credit on such points, from personal knowledge or inquiry. I should wish therefore to qualify any thing that may appear rash or peremptory, in what I hazard on such a subject, by avowing that degree of diffidence in my own views, which may be thought becoming with regard to facts, which though attested, I think, satisfactorily by others, have

not fallen under my own observation. But with this qualification, I confess that I find it difficult to resist a conclusion to which the general knowledge we may all possess of the human character, applied to such facts as all admit, seems to lead us. I must therefore profess a strong impression, that if to the physical force already possessed by the Catholic body, and which consists in superiority of numbers, were added by any such revolution as that which we are considering, the advantages of political power, and the weight and influence which belong to the authority of Government and Legislation, some danger might accrue to the property, the establishment, and even the personal security of the Protestant in Ireland; and with this apprehension on our own minds, the alarm expressed by those who are so deeply interested in the consequences of such measures, seems entitled to our serious and earnest attention.

I am not more clear, therefore, in thinking the Catholics entitled to a fair participation in the civil and political franchises of Irishmen, than I am in feeling, that the Protestants ought
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to be protected and defended in the security of their property, their religion, and their persons, against every violence which the Catholics might be disposed to attempt, when they have passed from their present state of subjection to that of authority and power. The dilemma, therefore, has hitherto consisted in this. The Protestants could not be supported in that ascendancy which seems necessary even for their protection, without derogating from what may appear to be a natural right of the Catholics. The Catholics could not be supported in their claim of equality, without transferring to them that ascendancy which equality of rights must draw to the larger body, and which from that moment must expose the Protestants to dangers from which they ought to be protected. Such seem to be the practical difficulties in the way of abstract justice, while the Government of Ireland continues merely local. An Irish Parliament, in which the ascendancy is either Protestant or Catholic, and it cannot choose, but lie on one side or the other, may be expected still, I fear, to gore and lacerate their country, by one or other of the horns of this dilemma; and I see no perfect remedy for Irish division,

and its lamentable consequences, while these two enraged and implacable opponents are still shut up together, are still enclosed within the very theatre, on the very arena of their ancient and furious contention. I do sincerely think that this divided and double condition of the Irish people requires something of an *imperial aula*, a legislature founded on a broader and more liberal basis, to administer impartial laws to all, and to reconcile security with justice. While one of these parties must judge the other, in which ever hand the fasces may be placed, I fear there is reason to expect only violence in the suit, and if not injustice, at least slow and imperfect justice in the decree. My mind, I confess, cannot resist the conviction arising out of all these considerations, that the united Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, will in the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, constitute a better legislature, and a more perfect, because a more impartial Parliament, for all Ireland, than any representation of a minor part or section of Ireland, in a separate, local Parliament ever can. I am persuaded that laws beneficial to the mass of the people of Ireland, and promoting its general prosperity and happiness,

piness, may be expected with greater confidence from the united Parliament, in which local partialities, interests, and passions, will not divert the straight and equal current of legislation, than in an Irish Parliament, where these stumbling blocks must for ever bend or impede its course. In the united Parliament right may be done unaccompanied by wrong. Irish Catholics may be invested with their political capacities, without the slightest danger to Protestant establishment or property. These, on the contrary, must acquire a tenfold and hundredfold security in the Protestant Parliament, and the genuine Protestant ascendancy of the united kingdom—The Protestant church and property may, on the other hand, be secured, without perpetuating the present humiliating and degrading exclusion of the Catholic part of the Irish nation. Such are some of the particularities in the condition of Ireland, which appear to me to add in her case, many powerful inducements to those which in every other instance may invite neighbouring and friendly countries to a close and intimate union of their governments.

I confess, that to me these considerations furnish, by no means the weakest recommendation of this measure. I look with peculiar satisfaction towards the prospect which it seems to open, I think in truth, for the first time in the history of Ireland, of doing justice to one part of that nation without injury to the other, and of providing for the general prosperity and happiness, without bringing calamity on any particular part. For I cannot consider the admission of fellow citizens to a participation of common franchises, as an injury to those who happen already to possess them ; nor the loss or even destitution of partial and exclusive dominion over fellow subjects, as any wrong. The Protestants have a sacred right to their properties, to their religion and to their own liberties ; but the liberties of their Catholic brethren are no part of that property ; they have no narrow corporate right, or none that I can wish to support them in, in the government of their countrymen ; nor can I see that the subjection of the Catholics must be an article in the charter of Protestant liberties.

If the Union, therefore, present a hope of meliorating the condition, and extinguishing the discontents of a great majority of the inhabitants of Ireland, without exposing the rest to danger, but on the contrary, adding the most substantial securities to all their legitimate rights, I must profess myself on that account, and perhaps, I may say, principally on that account, a warm friend to the measure ; and I am free to confess that if these were not to be the consequences, I should expect very little advantage from it. I am desirous, therefore, of declaring for myself, that I shall think the Union much more perfect, much better adapted to all its beneficial ends, and the benefits to be expected from it, in such a case, I think incalculable, if the just claims of the Catholic Irish are provided for by an explicit article of the treaty itself. After having thus declared my own mind, and distinctly pronounced my own judgment on this great leading point, I think it right to add, that if any political peculiarities of the present time, should render it impracticable to engross these wholesome provisions in the written treaty itself, I would rather restrain my wishes for the

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immediate accomplishment of this desirable end, than expose this great transaction to needless and unprofitable hazard, by unreasonable pertinacity or impatience. And I should still look with confidence to a period when the object I have mentioned will result as a natural consequence, from the treaty, and when this desirable change will flow, with many other blessings, from the impartiality of the imperial and united legislature—If I were worthy then of offering to the loyal Catholics of Ireland the advice of an individual, who has no other claim to their attention, than that of uniting a spirit of liberal toleration, and a strong favour towards common right as opposed to monopoly, of combining, I say, these sentiments with something of a practicable disposition which would not reject attainable good when a more perfect accomplishment of right is out of reach, I would implore their prudent acquiescence in a measure which must ultimately consolidate their interests with those of their country ; which will bring, in its season, relief to the Catholics and security to the Protestants of Ireland ; which will improve the wealth, the prosperity,

prosperity, the dignity, the manners, and the public and private happiness of their country; and which conferring these blessings with one hand, will avert with the other, the certain ruin, desolation and slavery, which are at this moment impending over their native land.

I wish to guard against one misinterpretation. When I prefer the United Parliament to that of Ireland, as at present constituted, I should be much misunderstood, if I were thought to profess a distrust of the wisdom and justice of the Irish Parliament in general, or to impute to it the slightest degree of incompetence to the general objects of its legislative duties. I profess, on the contrary, the highest and most unfeigned respect, both for the Irish Parliament as a body, and for many of its members, with whom I have, indeed, little, or I might nearly say, no personal acquaintance, but whose characters and talents, as public men, I have contemplated, as others do, with the respect and admiration they justly inspire. What I have hazarded on this subject, the delicacy of which I am not insensible to, amounts only to this; that in one great branch and member of Irish affairs, the pre-

sent Irish Parliament must be considered as a party, and in those concerns, a major part of the people must now receive the law from an adverse and rival authority. Whereas, in the United Parliament, the Irish members will furnish all the local information, and will possess all the weight and influence, which the general affairs and interests of that country require; while those local or partial feelings which might warp the judgment of the best intentioned Irishmen, on some subjects, might be moderated, and tempered, by the mediating impartiality of the imperial Parliament.

I would now consider one or two general objections, which I have observed to be most prominent in the opposition to this measure, and I shall begin with that which appears to have been the most operative and successful throughout Ireland, and to have had the greatest share in the rejection of this important and salutary proposal. I mean the notion, that a Legislative Union, however beneficial in its effect, to the interests of Ireland, is, however, in some way, derogatory to the honour, and national independence of that country.

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The whole of this topic will be found to be an appeal from reason to feeling, and, indeed, from a just and genuine feeling to a blind and inconsiderate one. It is intended, like most of the objections on this question, to preclude the discussion of its merits; and what is peculiar to this particular objection, it is not only intended to elude the merits of the principal question, but seems to disclaim the discussion even of any proper and specific merits of its own. It is used, in truth, to disqualify those to whom it is presented for all deliberation whatever, by exciting the passions, and interposing the flame and dazzle of enthusiasm, between the eye and the object it is to examine. Those who employ this topic, have undoubtedly a considerable advantage; for, in the first place, many more are susceptible of strong and lively feeling, than capable, or willing, to form an enlightened and deliberate judgment on any subject whatever. In the next place, the feeling applied to, is in itself by no means unnatural, and so far from being culpable, or a subject of reproach, must, on the contrary, be classed with those affections which are the most beneficial to the world,

and the most honourable to those who possess them. It is, in a word, a branch or mode of patriotism, that virtue which embraces the whole range of our public duties, and which is an object of too much respect and veneration, when genuine and well directed, not to challenge some indulgence even in its errors and delusions. I cannot, however, help suspecting, that those who avoid discussion, are not very firm or confident on the merits; and that passion is seldom exclusively applied to, when reason is on the same side. Enthusiasm is, indeed, in general, to be accounted but an unsafe and unfaithful guide. The guide is himself blind, and I know not how to search for truth with better hope of success, than by the light of such reason as Providence may have bestowed upon us. I should propose, therefore, to follow that course, and to consider dispassionately, even this passion. I would fairly and deliberately enquire, whether a sincere regard for the national dignity of Ireland, does, indeed, oppose any solid objection to a Legislative Union with Great Britain.

I shall

I shall waste but little of your Lordships' time, in analyzing the nature and foundation of those local affections towards particular spots, which seem to circumscribe the general benevolence of mankind within the rivers or seas, or mountains, which encompass that which we call our country. Perhaps that expansive love of our fellow creatures, which has obtained the general name of philanthropy, may have been compressed into narrower bounds, in order to augment its energy in the proper scene of its exertion; perhaps this large and diffuse motive may have been drawn home as it were, and retrenched within limits more commensurate with the size and sphere of human action. But no matter how or why, the love of our country certainly exists; it is the noblest affection of the human breast; and I have no doubt is of divine origin—I am to acknowledge that Ireland, both by its dimensions, its local position, and every other circumstance attending it, offers a fit object for that passion, the ardour of which may well be improved into enthusiasm and zeal, by the many natural charms which, I understand, abound in that country, and by that to which

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I can, indeed, speak myself, I mean the many generous qualities which distinguish its inhabitants, and seem to endear that nation to those who compose it—I am willing also to admit, that besides that solicitude for the happiness and well-being of the people who inhabit our country, which is the proper and distinctive feature by which true patriotism is to be recognized, this local affection may also attach a sort of interest, and a certain importance and value, to the separate political existence, or individuality, of that country. That identical space has contained the habitual objects of our regard, and an association may have been established between our local and moral attachment, in such a manner as to render it, perhaps, no easy abstraction, to love the people of Ireland, distinctly from that which may be called the love of Ireland. Nothing of all this need be controverted; nor is it desirable that it should be otherwise—I would only demand a similar assent to some particularities, which I think observable in this passion, and which appear to me to bear, in some degree, on the principal question. This local patriotism, then, seems to be limited

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ed not only by space, as we have seen, but also with some reference to time. The space to which the affection of patriotism attaches, is that which we have been accustomed to consider as our country, at a given time, that is to say, in our own time, or during our own generation. If it had been larger or smaller at our birth, our love would have expanded or contracted itself accordingly. We have seen a remarkable instance of this expansive property in local patriotism, or in this love of metes and bounds, as related by Mr. Hume, in the passage which I have read from his history of the Union of the Heptarchy. We have seen in that example, the inhabitants of the six conquered kingdoms transfer their allegiance to Egbert, and the minute partialities of these six countries, transgress their respective bounds, and in obedience to events, dilate, as by common consent, so as to occupy the whole surface of the united kingdom of England, and accommodate themselves to this change of boundary, with as much rapidity and ease, as the ambition of the Monarch himself had done to the growth of his dominions. This happened in the very season of
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repugnance and disgust which succeeds to conquest, and a vanquished Mercian or East Angle, ceased even in his own life, to think himself degraded by being called an Englishman.

The same truth has been evinced in Wales. Those who inhabited that principality in the early part of the reign of Harry the 8th, felt their patriotism and national feelings bounded by the mountains of their country, beyond which, indeed, so far from discovering the objects of affection, they found only those of antient animosity and habitual hostility. The same narrow bounds, however, no longer limit the public spirit and affections of those who have inhabited that part of our island since that memorable and fortunate æra in the history of Wales. I believe I may venture to say, that none of your Lordships who may have an interest in that country, and that no Welch gentleman, or inhabitant of Wales, would thank a Welch patriot who should propose to restore the dignity and independence of that country, by separating it once more from England; that is to say, who
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should forbid and prohibit every Welchman, from presuming to consider himself as entitled to any participation in the affairs, in the enterprises, in the greatness, consideration, or glory of that empire, of which his country is now a distinguished member. They would, no doubt, think the dignity of their countrymen strangely provided for by this second extermination; by driving them once more out of England, and cooping them up within the mountains of Wales, as the Saxon Conquerors had done by their British ancestors. I shall not easily persuade myself, that a Welch gentleman will think an affront or indignity is put upon himself, or his country, because Lord NELSON, for example, can take him by the hand as fellow-subject; or because his countryman *FOLEY was enabled, by the union of Wales, to lead the British fleet into action on the 1st of August, instead of heading some miserable predatory inroad across the Welch marches.

I may speak with better authority of another country. Those who inhabited Scotland in the reign of King William; those who

* Captain Foley, of his Majesty's ship *Goliath*.

inhabited that part of Scotland with which I am best acquainted, and who looked from their windows on the hills of Northumberland, at a few miles distance, had their patriotism bounded by their horizon, or rather their eye had a wider range than this large and liberal passion. It is not so with those who inhabit that country in the reign of George the Third, and this change, I am persuaded, was operated much sooner than some Noble Lords seem disposed to allow. A Noble Lord, (Lord Holland,) referred, on a former occasion, to a proceeding of this House in the year 1713, as furnishing some ground to suppose that the two countries were not soon reconciled to the Union. I am by no means disposed to deny, that the transaction alluded to, might furnish a very fair argument to be used in debate on this topic. It certainly imported, in its literal acceptation, the wish, at least of some individuals, for a dissolution of the Union, being an express motion for that purpose. It was negatived, indeed, by the House; but it was made by one of the sixteen Scotch Peers, and supported, generally, though I do not know that it was unanimously, by that body. I have

no reason to complain, therefore, of this proceeding being used in argument, to the point for which it was adduced ; but I must say, at the same time, that it does not appear to me as conclusive, as I am to presume it did to that Noble Lord. Your Lordships' leisure will not admit of my entering minutely into all the particulars of this proceeding ; but I must at least say, that it has by no means made the same impression on my mind, and I am not satisfied, that the people of Scotland or of England, or the Peerage of Scotland at large, or their representatives in this House who supported this motion, including even the mover of the question himself, were in earnest in desiring the separation of the united kingdoms. I do not think myself bound to believe merely on the letter of a motion in Parliament, any body of men, and especially that enlightened body to which I allude, capable of harbouring a design so absurd, and if sincere, so wicked and detestable, as that motion imported, while I can find any other motive, or can imagine any other object more rational and less culpable, to account sufficiently for the proceeding. I find then, no difficulty in dis-

covering abundant inducements for this motion, short of the absurd and incredible purpose which it expresses—I observe, in the first place, that it was made in the House of Lords, and originated with the sixteen Peers of Scotland. The Scotch Peerage was undoubtedly the body whose interests were least consulted, and who were the worst treated by the Union. But they had received fresh cause of complaint subsequent to that event. The abolition of the Privy Council of Scotland was, in my opinion, necessary to consolidate the Union, by removing that remaining nucleus of a local government, and separate interest. But this measure affected, no doubt, the views both of ambition and of vanity, of the Scotch Peerage and of the higher order of the gentry, though it very little concerned the people. The discontent of the Peerage excited by that measure, had been yet more recently enflamed by the decision of this House in the case of the Duke of Hamilton. His patent, as Duke of Brandon, had been disallowed, and by that proceeding it seemed decided, that a Scotch Peer, after the Union, should be incapable of receiving the independent dignity of a British Peerage ;

Peerage ; a disability highly injurious to the Peerage of Scotland, in its fondest aim, and reasonably offensive and disgusting to that body, already fore with prior provocations. If we consider this motion, then, as no more than the expression of the chagrin of this body ; but especially if it be considered as a means employed to give weight in future to their just pretensions, we shall assign as weighty a motive for such a proceeding as has produced many others of great importance in Parliament. These grievances were, indeed, expressly stated in the motion, amongst the reasons on which it was grounded. But the special occasion of this transaction was the extension of the malt-tax to Scotland. This tax was, in fact, felt to be oppressive on that country, and it was, besides, fairly questionable whether the imposition of this tax at that particular point of time was not contrary to an article of the Union. This objection applied indeed only to that particular period, and ceased afterwards, but it was subject to question at the time. I think on the whole that the Scotch members of both Houses were justified in standing out on this tax, and I think their Union and exertion on that occasion

sion did them honour, though I do not think the mode of opposition they chose judicious. I find, however, in the very occasion which gave rise to this proceeding, a sufficient motive, and a much more natural and indeed justifiable purpose than that which the motion literally imported. It was intended to enforce the opposition of Scotland to the malt-tax, and to coerce the Minister on that point, not by the dissolution of the Union, but by the intimidation which the very menace of such a fatal step might be expected to produce. The English Peers who supported this motion had themselves been the authors and promoters of the Union. But they were the opposition of the day, and it appears, could not deny themselves the satisfaction of using the opportunity which this Scotch question of the malt-tax afforded them, of distressing the Minister of the day, by the singular and rare union of the Representatives of Scotland, even for a few hours, against the Court. It lasted, indeed, no longer; and the opposition of the sixteen Peers seems to have spent and exhausted itself in this single act, in which I can discern only a general expression of their own particular disgust, and a wish to stand well with

with their country by opposing the malt-tax. The opposition to that tax, and the attempt at least to modify it, as to Scotland, was the true occasion of this motion, and instead of so absurd and flagitious, but so important and momentous a design as that of dissolving the Union, there appears to me to have been nothing deeper in the matter, than the wish on one hand to tease a Minister, and on the other to obtain the reduction of threepence on the bushel of malt, in a tax upon Scotland. I am a good deal confirmed in this view of the transaction, by observing that although this tax was renewed every year, and was objected to by the Scotch members in the House of Commons, I do not find a hint of any new intention to dissolve the Union. Various other questions interesting to Scotland were discussed, without producing the slightest intimation of such a design; and I find one, very little posterior to that on which the noble Lord has relied, so remarkable, that I cannot help mentioning it; I mean the extraordinary bill, known by the name of the Peerage Bill, which actually passed this House in the year 1719, but was thrown out, as might be expected, in the House of Commons.

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Neither the Peerage of Scotland, nor the Scotch nation, have ever received, since the Union, so signal a provocation as that bill appears to me to have offered to them. It proposed, in direct terms, the complete disfranchisement of the whole body of the Scotch Peers, and stripped them even of the elective franchise which the Union had left them, without any other compensation worthy of notice, than that of seeing such of their representatives as were parties to this spoliation, rewarded by British Peerages, which were to make them independent in future, of the favour, or resentment of their injured constituents. This measure, as your Lordships must see, was, at the same time, the most flagrant violation of the Union in some of its most fundamental articles, and could not fail of exciting general disgust and alarm throughout Scotland, by breaking so wantonly the integrity, and shaking the security of that solemn treaty. The Bill was accordingly debated with great warmth, at great length, and, I think, with much ability in both Houses of Parliament; and I have troubled your Lordships with these particulars, for the purpose of observing, that throughout those debates, on a subject sufficiently

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ently offensive and irritating to Scotland, there was not dropped from the lips of a single individual, an intimation of any such wish for separation, as had been expressed in the proceeding of the year 1713. A certain proof that such a wish could not be general in either country, and a pretty conclusive argument that it was not professed or entertained by any considerable party or description of men then known in England or Scotland. On this review of the period immediately succeeding the Union, I might, without much prejudice to my argument, concede all the Noble Lord can claim from the motion of 1713, though I am far from making that admission in fact; but if I were to grant that in the year 1713, some indications of indisposition and alienation between the countries remained; that six short years of Union had not completely appeased and obliterated the animosities of four centuries, but that six years more had been sufficient for that purpose; that after the lapse of six years from their Union, no trace of unkindness was discernible, and, that in twelve years after that Union, the strongest provocation had failed in exciting it, I do not think, I say, that for the purpose of the present argument, I

shall have made a concession of much value or importance ; and with this remark I shall pass forward to times of which I am entitled to speak with the confidence of personal knowledge. I will venture then to assure your Lordships, and to speak for my neighbours as well as myself, that at this day we see without humiliation or regret, those towers and beacons, which were very necessary appendages of our independence, at least, before the union of the crowns; when we had a predatory enemy within ten miles of us ; we behold, I say, without mortification or concern, those badges of imperial dignity mouldering, and in ruins, on our rocks, while we can see the plains below covered with crops, which he who sows is now sure of reaping ; and while we can extend our views of national greatness and dignity, and all our public feelings, whether of pride or of affection, not only beyond the little range of hills that we look upon, but to the remotest extremities of the habitable globe. I will venture to declare for my country, that with the exception of those false Scotchmen, whom the enemy has been able to corrupt or to delude, and who, I trust, for the honour of Scotland, are both few and contemptible ; but with that
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exception of the partizans of France, I will venture to pronounce, that there does not at this hour live a Scotchman of any degree or condition, from Berwick to the Orkneys, whose British patriotism would not be more offended, and certainly much more reasonably, by a proposal for separating these kingdoms, than the patriotism of Fletcher of Saltown, or Lockhart of Carnwath, could be at the beginning of the century, by the proposal for uniting them.

I have dwelt somewhat longer on this topic than, perhaps, I ought, principally for the purpose of shewing what the nature and value of that object is, for which Ireland has been persuaded to renounce and reject with anger, the greatest and most evident advantages that were ever offered to a nation. It is in the first place, then, a sentiment, or feeling, which it is difficult to define, and not perhaps easy even to conceive distinctly. In the next place, this sentiment, such as it is, is so limited in duration, and so obsequious to events, that it is not enough to say that it expires. It actually changes sides—and the very sacrifices we would make to it at one period, will, at a sub-

sequent point of time, and from thence ever after, prove as much in contradiction with, and as offensive to, this very feeling, as it might be welcome and grateful to it before. What then is this mighty object to which such sacrifices are required? It is an airy unsubstantial sentiment; it is a transient, evanescent, metaphysical point, to which we are called upon to sacrifice not only the solid and substantial, but the permanent and perpetual interests of two great nations.

I confess I cannot persuade myself to rank a sentiment so subtle, and subject to so many refined and delicate modifications, with that sound and genuine affection, or I can class it only as a subordinate mode of that plain and manly passion, which has deserved, by excellence, the style and dignity of patriotism. True patriotism will, I think, be found to rest on the solid basis of some rational and useful principle, which will keep it uniform and uninfluenced by time or circumstance, and which may serve as a criterion to distinguish its own genuine and steady course, from the capricious and irregular motions of some of its many counterfeits. The love of our country may be
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rational or fantastical as that of any other object; and, I must consider patriotism as partaking sufficiently of the nature of general affection, to acknowledge it for genuine, only when it is evinced by solicitude for the welfare of its object. I fix on this as the distinctive character of sincere affection, whether for our country or for any other object of regard. Public love is founded in utility, and by that mark alone may challenge its descent from Heaven. The rest is all spurious, and to be viewed rather with caution than respect. On this clear principle, then, shall we not say, that a true patriot proposes to himself before all things, the prosperity and happiness of those who inhabit his country? He may set a value, if he pleases, on the distinct existence, and individuality of that country; but if his love be well regulated, and all its modes and affections be in due subordination, he will prefer the solid and real happiness of his country to its metaphysical identity. It is to this chaste and disciplined patriotism, that I would appeal, on the present question, against the noisy and clamorous pretence, which would usurp its seat, and bear away the decision by acclamation and tumult, before a sober and enlightened judgment, founded

founded on the solid basis of public utility, can silence this importunate and delusive feeling. To sum up my argument on this point, in plain, but I think, satisfactory terms; if a separate political existence is contrary, nay fatal to the real interests of the people of Ireland; and if a perfect incorporation and union with the British Empire, must be productive of security, aggrandizement and happiness to Ireland, such an Union should on this single but decisive ground, of great and permanent utility, be the first and fondest wish of every Irish heart.

But let us yield even this principle for a moment. Let us subscribe to that strange incomprehensible duty which I have heard proclaimed with a sort of triumph, even in this House, and by which it is required that in a question such as this, the Legislature should banish from their thoughts and contemplation every concern for the interests of the nations which they represent, and that the decision of this mighty question should be founded on any thing but its influence on the national advantage or security. Let us admit the insignificance of Irish prosperity and happiness, and the exclusive title of what is called distinctness and dignity, to
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our solicitude; I still say that even these objects are not provided for, by rejecting the present measure. For the choice does not lie between the present condition of Ireland and Union. We are not ignorant that the alternative is according to every moral probability, union or separation; that is to say union or ruin; union with Great Britain, or slavery to France. If this measure be not adopted, we know that the distinctness of Ireland must expire; that her political extinction must be accomplished; that she must undergo a change a thousand fold more degrading, as well as destructive, and more fatal to her independence and dignity, by means which no mistaken patriotism can prefer. I mean by subjection to a foreign conqueror, or at best by a debased and slavish dependence on the general tyrant and task-master of Europe. Instead of preserving her present independence, or acquiring new accession of importance and dignity, by her association with the British Empire, Ireland is in danger of dropping into that common sepulchre of nations, which has already buried the very names and memories of so many states and kingdoms, now no more. Will the identity or the dignity of Ireland be preserved,

preserved, when after being first the dupe and the servile tool of France, she becomes her real and effectual slave, under some ridiculous or antiquated nick-name, invented or revived, for the very purpose of obliterating her own ?

Let us consider this question in one view more, and setting aside both the real interests of Ireland, and the chances of separation with its attendant calamities, let us only compare the present condition of Ireland in mere dignity, with its future condition, in that single respect, after the Union ; for we shall find the opposers of the Union mistaken in the means of consulting even barren dignity, when they prefer the present situation of Ireland to its incorporation with the British Empire.

In what does the dignity of a nation truly consist ? Is it merely in its *separate*, or in its *independent* existence ? If Ireland, from the very nature of things, is, and always must, while it is a separate kingdom, remain, in some respects and in some degree, dependent, subordinate, inferior ; and the day after its Union with Great Britain, becomes altogether independent, sovereign and equal, how is its dignity

nity better assured by the former condition than by the latter? We must enquire then what the present situation of Ireland truly is, in point of independence

Although I should wish to be perfectly frank and explicit, in pointing out those circumstances of necessary and unavoidable subordination which really exist, I would by no means insist on others, which I have heard enlarged upon, I think, with a false pride on our part, and perhaps with reasonable offence to the national feeling of Irishmen, and which, at the same time, do not appear to me genuine tokens of subordination in any respect. Of this description, I consider the necessity under which Ireland labours of claiming, in times of danger, whether from foreign or domestic enemies, the protection of the British navy, and military, as well as pecuniary aid from this country. I conceive Ireland to have a perfect right to this friendly and brotherly co-operation, on two grounds, which seem to me to preclude altogether, either a mortifying humiliation on one hand, or an offensive pride on the other. First, the preservation of Ireland is an English interest, and is a concern sufficiently

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ently precious to call for these exertions, even on a distinct and separate view of our own advantage. In the next place, Ireland is entitled to this support, from an Empire to which she is associated, and to the general service and security of which she is herself contributing, cheerfully, and at all times; in every branch of public service. Her seamen, her soldiers, and her revenue, all augment the general stock of British resources. And if peculiar and temporary emergencies have, at this, or any other particular period, increased the local demands of Ireland on the exertions of the Empire, we must recollect, that the scene of danger, may at other times be shifted; and we have no reason to doubt, but, on the contrary, have recent grounds, very honourable to Ireland, for believing, that she will be ready to furnish extraordinary exertion, and aid, to repel extraordinary danger on this side of the water, if such occasions should arise.

I must also dissent from another topic which I have heard used, as indicating a national dependence of Ireland on Great Britain. I mean the advantages which she derives from the extensive commerce without, and the prosperous

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manufactures within, which are supposed to flow, and which, I believe, really do flow, in a great part, from a free participation in the imperial greatness of Great Britain, and from encouragements which she might withhold if so advised. Here again, I think, Ireland may accept, I will not say, without gratitude, but without humiliation, as Great Britain ought to bestow without pride. When the question has been stated between entire separation and Union, these considerations are very pertinently submitted to the prudence of Ireland, as they have been, with great ability, by the Noble Lord * who preceded me; for the advantages alluded to, would, no doubt, be withdrawn with perfect justice, and indeed, by indispensable policy, if all connexion between us were dissolved. But when the question is placed on the footing of the present argument, that is to say, on a view of our present imperial relation, I then feel, that considering the importance of that relation to Great Britain, as well as to Ireland, the communication of these imperial advantages seems to belong to the very nature of the case, and to flow naturally from the

* Lord Auckland.

sentiment of fraternity and reciprocal kindness which should accompany such a connexion. These favours seem to be prompted certainly by a liberal, but at the same time, by a wise policy; they are the gifts of an elder to a younger brother; not the wages paid by a superior to a dependant. They ought to excite gratitude, and to improve as well as to secure affection between us; but they need not either exalt the pride of one, or humble that of the other; and, to say the truth, I cannot help feeling that the pride of Ireland may be very well reconciled to an obligation, for which she has the consciousness of returning in the reciprocal blessings of imperial connexion, an ample and corresponding equivalent. I erase, therefore, such topics as these, from my argument of Irish subordination. They appear to me not more inconclusive to that point, than somewhat removed, perhaps, from that liberality which ought to characterize such discussions, whether between individuals or nations; and if these obligations of Ireland to Great Britain are ever enlarged upon, I confess I should see it with more pleasure in Ireland, than in this country.

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Those real indications of subordination, on which I mean however to rely, appear to me such as ought not to mortify Ireland; because they are derived from the very nature and constitution of human affairs, and especially from one cause, which must afford, I conceive, rather gratification than disgust to national feeling, I mean the imperial connexion which makes Ireland a member of the noblest empire of the globe. For what, after all, is this imperial connexion in the necessity of which we are all agreed? If it be any thing more than a name, and if it afford any substantial advantage, does it not consist in securing a conformity, or rather a perfect uniformity and unity, in the counsels of the two countries on affairs of imperial concern? Such are, in some respects the regulation of commerce; the transactions and intercourse with foreign states; the declaration of war; the conduct and direction of war; the negotiation and conditions of peace. These are the principal, if not all the points of imperial or common concern; and in these it is admitted, and it is manifest that, for common safety and advantage, the two countries must be governed by one mind, and directed by one will, to the same end. Now
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let me ask in what manner is uniformity to be ensured on points so much subject to doubt in themselves, submitted to a judgment, I mean that of the human mind, the variety and uncertainty of which is proverbial, and especially where some degree of temporary and occasional opposition, both of feeling and interest, may be looked for in particular seasons and circumstances—I need not go about to prove by any tedious argument, what is always conceded on this point, nor need I scruple to assert what the best Irish patriots, and warmest partizans of Irish independence have always freely acknowledged, that unity of counsels can be brought about and preserved, only by leaving the lead to one of these nations in those points on which it is necessary that they should agree. Every sensible and enlightened Irish statesman, has, I think, admitted that in imperial concerns, Ireland must, and ought to follow in the wake of Great Britain. Here then is one authentic and signal badge of real subordination. But how is this necessary acquiescence of Ireland to be ensured? For it stands as yet on discretion and prudence, not on positive provision. May not an interval of passion, or the spleen of some contentious moment, or the influence of some popular

popular leader, persuade Ireland, in an evil hour, to assert her right of separate and independent deliberation in the common concerns, and to vindicate that right, by setting up an opinion of her own, different from that adopted in England? Against this misfortune, which would otherwise be pretty sure of happening, the constitution of our connexion with Ireland has provided some securities. In the first place we have the same King. The King of Great Britain is, in virtue of that crown, King also of Ireland. Ireland is content to follow the fortunes of England in that great point; and this I state as another circumstance of dependence. But there are other still more sensible tokens of practical subordination—The whole executive government of Ireland is administered by a viceroy, appointed indeed by the Sovereign of Ireland, but not with the advice of an Irish cabinet. He is appointed, in effect, by a British Minister, he is subject to instructions from a British Secretary of State, and responsible for every part of his administration municipal as well as imperial, not to the Irish Parliament, not to the Irish Laws, but to the British Parliament and its high tribunals. Even this is not all; for all this may be thought inseparable

rable from the nature and frame of our connexion. There remains a point which was not so much the unavoidable consequence of the imperial constitution, but was thought subject to such a moral and political necessity, as to have been deliberately assented to and retained by the most enlightened and ardent patriots of Ireland, even in the jealous review of her constitution, which took place at that period of enthusiasm and triumph which is become the grand æra of Irish freedom and pride, I mean the year 1782. The circumstance I now allude to is this. The legislative functions of the sovereign of Ireland can be performed only under the Great Seal, not of Ireland, but of Great Britain. Notwithstanding the extreme and jealous tenderness of the Irish nation, on all that could remotely, or even in the refinements of political subtlety, affect the independence of their Parliament ; although that Parliament is the shrine on which the nation itself is, it seems, now to be laid a victim ; that Irish Parliament was left, and remains at this hour, dependent for the validity of every one of its legislative acts, first on the Chancellor of England, and through his responsibility, on that very Parliament of
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England, an equal participation in the authority of which is thought so degrading to Ireland. God forbid that Ireland should change her mind on these points of voluntary subordination, or that her pride should supersede her wisdom, and a false dignity take the place of her substantial interests at least in these particulars. For such are the few slender threads which yet hold together these ponderous bodies, and whenever they are broken we part for good. There is yet one other circumstance which not only indicates inferiority, but is so wholly irreconcilable with every notion of equality, and appears to me such a singularity in the condition of any country claiming the character of independent sovereignty, that I must add it to the list before I quit this topic. Ireland must take her part in all the wars of Great Britain. She must bear her share of their burthens, and incur all their hazards. She may lose a province, or may become herself a province of the enemy. Yet Ireland cannot, by the utmost success of the war, acquire an acre of new territory to the Irish dominion. Every acquisition made by the forces of the Empire, however great her share may have been in the danger or exertion, accrues

to the Crown of Great Britain. If an island were taken by regiments raised in Ireland, and composed wholly of Irishmen, and by ships manned altogether by Irish seamen, that island is a British conquest and not an Irish one. Ireland claims no sovereignty in any one of the foreign possessions or provinces of the British Empire. She pretends to no dominion in India, in Ceylon, at the Cape of Good Hope, at Martinique, Trinidad, or Minorca. The Irish Parliament has never asserted or conceived the right of legislating for any of the conquests of the King of England, that is to say, of the King of Ireland. They are all subject *ipso facto*, to the Legislature of Great Britain. Ireland has planted no Irish colonies, but has furnished planters to all those of Great Britain. In a word, this whole class of sovereign rights and capacities, however inherent in the very nature of sovereignty, is wholly wanting in that of Ireland. If we were asked to define, or at least to describe an independent sovereignty, should we err much by saying, it is a state which can make war and peace, which can acquire dominion by conquest, and which can plant colonies, and establish foreign settlements? And if we would describe a subordinate

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nate and dependent country, could we do it better than by saying, it is a country which must contribute her quota to all the wars of a neighbouring kingdom, must incur all the risks of those wars and partake in all their disasters; while all that is acquired by their success falls, like the lion's share, to that country with which it claims to be co-ordinate and co-equal. I will insist no further on this ungracious topic. What I have said, was necessary for my argument, and if I have demonstrated the real subordination of Ireland, it was certainly not for the disingenuous pleasure of gratifying the vanity of one nation, at the expence of another, but only to observe that subordination must be the constant companion of an imperial connexion with a more powerful and more considerable state, and that pride can fly only to one of two remedies; I mean, total and absolute separation, or a perfect, incorporating and equalizing Union.

This argument is often conducted as if the question lay between distinct existence and total extinction. This is a false view of the alternative. If Ireland foregoes her separate individuality, it is not to perish; but still preserving

ing in full life and vigour, her own existence, she becomes identified with a larger whole ; and so far from the pretended annihilation, with which our adversaries would alarm her, she appears to me to acquire new extension. I would ask, in what manner is an inhabitant of any province or county of Ireland degraded, when he is enabled to say that he is an Irishman, and that he is besides a citizen of the united empire of Great Britain and Ireland ; and when instead of admission, as it were, by courtesy, to an indirect and circuitous advantage from the greatness of another country, to which he himself claims to be in some sort a stranger, he can assert as clear a title and as positive ownership and property in the glory and prosperity of the empire to which he will belong, as any native of Great Britain can do at this moment ? I cannot better describe the condition of Ireland after the Union, or better illustrate the improvement of its independence and dignity, than by saying, that her situation will from that moment be precisely the same in all points with that of Great Britain herself. Unless we suppose, therefore, Ireland in her present situation, more independent and less subordinate than Great Britain, we cannot imagine

gine that her independence will be diminished by the Union. And if it be true, as we have shewn, that she is at present, dependent, and subordinate to Great Britain in many respects, it is clear, that a Union which shall have the effect of placing the two countries on a footing of perfect equality, must improve the independence and dignity of the inferior, that is to say, of Ireland. Is Ireland then annihilated by these means? No; Ireland is still Ireland, while a new scope is given to the pride, and a larger field opened to the patriotism of every Irishman. Let me ask, in fine, where we shall discover in the present condition of Ireland, that superior degree of independent dignity, which should outweigh the real and solid benefits of Union; or where we can perceive in the change which that Union will operate on the political situation of Ireland, the degradation and indignity which should forbid her even to deliberate, and raise an insuperable barrier, both to her aggrandizement and happiness?

I do conceive, indeed, how the situation of some individuals may be such as to afford a greater share of personal consideration or advantage

vantage in Ireland, while confined within its present limits, than they might obtain on the greater theatre of the united kingdoms. Even here, indeed, the computation may be fallacious ; but however that question may stand with regard to individuals, I am sure that the inhabitants of Ireland will gratify a sound love of national dignity, while they procure to their country unspeakable advantages of every other sort, by their accession to the noble empire of which the Union would make them citizens.

I must therefore conclude, that although I must respect the feelings of those who, following this instinct of national pride, which I have allowed to be in some sort natural, have been blinded to the true merits of this question, either as it regards the interests or the dignity of their country ; and, although I cannot refuse a considerable degree of indulgence, even to the intemperance and violence excited by any form of patriotifm, and even by its errors ; yet I must persist in saying, that those will ever appear to me to have evinced a more genuine, a more profound and sollicitous affection for their country, who have not refused to de-
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liberate on such mighty interests, but have resisted a first and false impulse, and chosen for their guide rather the slower and less captivating torch of reason, than the more lively flashes of passion and prejudice. Nor can I refrain from adding, that if there be indeed any individuals, or descriptions of men, who not misled themselves, but far above the influence of those delusions which they have practised upon the multitude, have seen nothing in this great question but personal or local interests, and have sought to mask a narrow preference of individual and partial advantage, under this pretence of national pride and feeling; if such men, I say, with these motives at the bottom of their hearts, and with the profanation of a great public virtue on their lips, have frustrated the wise and paternal counsel given by our common Sovereign for the permanent and perpetual benefit, and not less for the present and immediate preservation of the empire in all its parts, and especially of their own particular country; I own I cannot part with this subject, without declaring loudly, that I envy, neither the pillows and consciences of those men, nor the place they are likely to fill in the history of their country.

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There is yet one objection on which I am disposed to trespass on your Lordship's indulgence, rather from the importance which has been given to it by those who oppose the Union, than from any weight I think it entitled to myself. The point I now allude to, is a supposed disability in the respective Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland to sanction such a measure.

This is another objection on which the merits of the main question are waved, and in which those who have been defeated on that ground, or who are conscious that they must be so, would still take refuge. It resembles a plea to the jurisdiction; and, although I am far from assenting to a very absurd doctrine which I have heard falsely ascribed to our law, that he who pleads to the jurisdiction shall abide by that plea; and when it has been overruled shall not plead over, but be concluded on the facts and merits of his cause; yet I think myself entitled to claim thus much from those who resort to this objection. That, although after it has been over-ruled, and the jurisdiction of Parliament has been established, they shall be at liberty to recur back to the question

question of expediency; yet, while we are discussing the question of competence, and for the purpose of that argument, the merits shall be granted. The objection cannot otherwise be placed on its own proper and peculiar ground. For, if the competence of Parliament were disputed merely on the ground of expediency in the particular act, it must be felt in a moment that the question of competence with regard to the Union, would stand exactly on the same footing as if it related to any other legislative measure, however clearly within the acknowledged powers and daily practice of Parliament. In order to obtain, therefore, a distinct and substantive judgment on the question of competence, it must be kept pure; and uncomplicated with any other consideration; which can only be done by trying it in a case of admitted expediency. I think myself entitled, then, for the purpose of this argument, to assume, that the proposed Union would be beneficial to both countries, and I am at liberty to state its advantages, or its necessity as high as I please. In a word, my adversary in this argument must assent to the measure as expedient and necessary, denying, only, the authority of Parliament to execute it.

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Now, if a measure be expedient, I am to ask, in the first place, why may it not be executed by Parliament? and, in the next place, if Parliament is not competent, where shall we find a more adequate authority? I have, for me, the general rule and law of the Constitution, which establishes the universal authority of the Legislature, and defines it by no limits or qualification that I am acquainted with. Whatever the whole nation could do, if there were no Parliament, is within the regular and fundamental powers of Parliament. This is admitted to be the general rule; and here I might plant my foot, at least until the exception were specified, and the principle of that exception established. The universality of Parliamentary power has been characterized by the strong and emphatic title of Omnipotence. And, in the theory of our Constitution, strong and emphatic as this phrase is, it need not, I think, be deemed, merely a bold figure, as it has been called by some writers on our Government, but as literally and correctly descriptive of parliamentary supremacy, and of the unlimited sovereignty of the British Legislature.

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I am aware of the reply generally made to this assertion of unlimited power. I may be told, that powers unlimited in theory, are yet finite and controuled in practice, and that, in its exercise, the most unbounded authority is still circumscribed, at least within the moral boundaries of right and wrong. I assent to this restriction, and even assert it; but what does my adversary gain by this concession? Parliament ought not to do what is wrong, and is to be supposed incapable of doing it. In this sense, the power of Parliament, is no more limited than the Divine Omnipotence itself, which is incapable of evil. I say also of Parliament, that it is incapable of evil; and I say it in this sense, that what Parliament does is not to be accounted evil, but is to be taken and acquiesced in as right—Why? will it be said. Is not Parliament composed of men, and therefore fallible? Yes—but who must judge the fallibility of Parliament, and to whom must its questionable acts be submitted—if it be not to other men, yet more fallible than themselves? For I wish to know where men are to be found, or in what forms or combinations they are to be assembled, to whom
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such a superlative authority could with safety be confided.

The more we turn this argument, and the more carefully it is viewed on all its sides and bearings, the more we shall be satisfied, that the only security we possess for every thing valuable in the British Government; that all that conduces to order and happiness; that the whole efficacy of our Constitution towards its great and beneficial purposes, resides in this single principle, of the unlimited, unqualified, supremacy of Parliament. There is no appeal, acknowledged in the Constitution, from that authority, because no appellate tribunal can be imagined, habile to such a jurisdiction; none from which the wisdom of those many ages, which have brought our Constitution to maturity and excellence, has not already constituted an appeal, final and conclusive in all cases whatever, to that very Parliament, from which you would, again, appeal back to them. Observe the vicious circle into which this appeal from the Parliament to the People must lead us. The people at large cannot conveniently, nor safely for themselves, make law, or administer

administer Government. The Constitution of Parliament has therefore been framed, as affording the most commodious and perfect organ of Law and Government, and the best and most secure depositary of the sovereign authority. But their acts must, it seems, be questioned, and their authority superseded by that very people at large, whose inability and unaptness have given occasion to the institution of Parliament. The speedy resolution of the argument into this contradiction and absurdity, is, therefore, manifest.

It is easy to foresee that this claim of unlimited power may be opposed by the counter-claim of a right to resist an abuse and perversion of authority, however legal. This question of resistance, that is to say, concerning the right of the subject to oppose by force, the act or orders of the legal sovereign, by which your Lordships know, I should not mean, in this country merely the throne, but that I speak of that body in which the full sovereignty of any nation resides, according to the established Constitution of its Government, and which, with reference to this kingdom, would be the Parliament; the point, I say, thus explained,
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of resistance, at the discretion of the subject, to the legal sovereign, is of no trivial concern, and ought not to be rashly or irreverently approached. The question is of high import, and delicate complexion. It appears to me, to be one of those mysteries, the acknowledgment of which is much connected with its reclusive sanctity, and its being withdrawn from daily and vulgar contemplation, to be reserved only for the great occasions which are worthy to draw it forth, and, “*like a robe pontifical,*” “*—ne’er to be seen, but wondered at.*” I believe it is impossible that any thing better should be said on this subject, than what I find quoted by an eloquent patriot of my own country, Mr. Fletcher, of Saltown, from the mouth of Mr. William Colvin, whom he styles one of the wisest men Scotland ever had, and who, speaking of defensive arms, that is to say, the right of the subject to carry arms, for the purpose of resisting oppression from the Sovereign, was used to express himself in these remarkable words: “That it were to be wished
 “all Princes thought them lawful, and the
 “People unlawful. No wish can be more salutary, and no answer to this delicate and important question can be more perfectly wise

as well as discreet. I confess, also, that on this single subject, I do not like the solution the worse for being somewhat oracular.— But if a peremptory opinion be demanded, and we must needs pronounce, I think myself entitled to answer generally in the language of the constitution. No limit has been appointed to the authority of the sovereign; nor any exception specified to the obedience of the subject. The constitution has not foreseen any case of resistance, and has made no provision for it. Such a case is not, and cannot be, in the contemplation of any constitution whatever. A pre-established, that is to say, a constitutional right of resistance to the constitutional sovereign is a solecism; a mere contradiction in terms. It can exist in no constitution that either is, or ever was, because it is inconsistent with the very notion of constitution, or government. We must answer, then, that resistance is illegal, and is contrary to the law, in every form of government of which law is the foundation. If an extreme case be put to me, I may well refuse to answer it, until the case arise in practice. Stated theoretically, it is always a snare. When it happens practically the case will answer for itself; and
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if resistance would not follow on the spur of any provocation that can be stated, without the previous sanction of some declared, and anticipated authorization in the constitution to legalize it, it is a case which we may pronounce, by that very criterion, unfit to produce or justify resistance. Every case of resistance must stand as it were upon its own individual responsibility, and must be such as to provide for itself, without the aid of any antecedent principle to lean upon. Such cases, whatever may be said of them by history, whatever may be felt of them by the generous sympathies of mankind, must look for no support from law, with which they cannot co-exist; they are all without the pale of law and all illegal; they are all extra-constitutional; all in direct contradiction with the particular constitution, as well as with the general principle of government; they are mere solitary, insulated, substantive facts, equally incapable of deriving from, or generating any binding analogy of general and permanent authority. These questions are not new in this country. We have passed through a century of such controversies, and have, since that period, enjoyed a century more of happiness, the fruit of
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the wise and profound, as well as spirited judgment of our ancestors on these debates; a judgment, as your Lordships know, equally removed, on one hand, from a mean and pusillanimous acquiescence under oppression, and on the other from those shallow but ruinous abstractions which so much pains are taken to bring once more into fashion. We do not come, therefore, in England, so raw into these discussions, as to be misled by the juvenile refinements of political metaphysics, or by the early puerilities of those who may have read their Locke without reading history, or who in reading their Locke have forgot their history, into errors, which we know to be as fatal to the practical blessings of liberty, as to the strength and stability of government. We know that an established system and theory of resistance is but another word for anarchy; and that, whatever be the excellence of any constitution in other respects, however wisely and skilfully constructed it may be, even for stability, in its other provisions, let there be added this one principle of a permanent and subsisting right to resist, even in the most limited case, since the existence of that case must, by the very nature of the thing, be submitted to

the discretion of every individual in the state, that constitution will bear in its bosom the seed of its own dissolution, and a principle of dispersion and demolition, utterly irreconcilable with the tranquillity or peace of the people, and destructive of all tenacity and duration in the government.

But it will be said, this is not a question of resistance, and we are enquiring only whether this measure does not exceed the limits of that authority with which the constitution has invested Parliament.

I am then, to ask, since the power of Parliament is general and undefined, in what respect is this particular act distinguishable from others which are admitted to be within its competence, in such a manner as to become an exception to the general rule of the constitution. And here I am under the difficulty of those who are to combat without an adversary, or to combat an adversary whom they cannot see. I am to search for my opponent, or must begin by creating the enemy whom I am afterwards to engage. For as yet I have certainly heard nothing precise on this subject.

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I must, therefore, look amongst the distinctive qualities of this measure, for some circumstance on which to found the exception. The first circumstance I observe in the Union of two countries, is an extension of territory, compared with the former bounds and surface of each, since each is respectively augmented by the accession of the other. But this effect of Union cannot be a ground of disqualification to Parliament, since the constitution commits the same power to a narrower authority. I mean the prerogative of the Crown alone. If a conquest be made without any contrary stipulation, the conquered country becomes subject, *ipso facto*, to the Legislation of Parliament. The King may also obtain by treaty the annexation of any new territory to his Crown, by which means it will fall, of course, under the Government of the British Parliament. In both these ways the dominion of Great Britain can be enlarged, to any extent, by the sole prerogative of the Crown—and much more by the King in Parliament. We must look, then, for some other circumstance in this case to exclude the general authority of Parliament.

Besides

Besides extending the bounds of the kingdom, at present subject to the sovereignty of Parliament, a Legislative Union extends and enlarges Parliament itself, accommodating the size of the Legislature to the accession of territory. It amounts then to an alteration in the frame and condition of Parliament; and we are to enquire whether Parliament is, on that account, disqualified from performing it.

It may be worth while to remark, in the first place, that this formal change is however consonant with the general spirit and genius of the Constitution. Is it not fair, while we are discussing the conditions under which two countries are to be united, to consider what would have been the case if they had been one from the beginning? Would not Ireland, in that case, have had representatives in the Legislature? It would not be difficult to shew from history, that while Ireland was considered as exclusively under the Government of the English Parliament, that is to say, before the institution of the Irish Parliament, that country sent members to the Parliament of England. The same principle has generally, though
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I do not say without exception, operated in similar cases, I mean in cases of the accession of contiguous territories. Of this, Wales, the Counties Palatine, and Scotland, are familiar examples. The minor instances of Calais, and Berwick on Tweed, may have been less attended to, but they illustrate also this general propensity of our Constitution. While Calais was subject to the Crown of England, that town enjoyed and exercised, by charter from Harry the Eighth, the privilege of sending two burgesses to Parliament. And as soon as Berwick on Tweed, which being a frontier town, frequently changed masters according to the various fortune of war, was at length settled under the dominion of England, by the union of both Crowns, and the final extinction of war, at the accession of James the First, that town received also the franchise of returning members to Parliament. The Constitution, in a word, leans that way: and it may, perhaps, reasonably be thought a greater violence to that Constitution, and a more fundamental and essential change, to add extensive territories to the country already governed by Parliament, without giving to those territories a participation in the Constitution, and a share in the

the representation, than to accompany 'such an accession of territory with a legislative as well as an incorporating union. Yet, no man disputes the power of the Crown, according to the prerogative which I have lately stated, to operate the former and the greater change even without the aid of Parliament. It is not, then, fair to argue, *a fortiori*, and *a multo fortiori*, that the larger authority of the whole Legislature, shall be more competent, or much more competent, to the smaller change, that is to say, to extend the bounds of the empire in a manner congenial and in unison with the Constitution, as it would do in the measure proposed, than the narrower power of the prerogative can be to the greater change, that is to say, to an accession of territory and an union with other countries, on a principle abhorrent from the genius of our Government. Yet the competence of these latter acts, whether to the Crown or to the Parliament, has never been disputed ; and rests, indeed, too firmly on the repeated and ordinary exercise of their powers to admit of question.

But let us return to this objection, and admit, that a Legislative Union with Ireland,
must

must operate a change on the condition, or even on the Constitution of Parliament; and let that change be as considerable as the objector would choose to state it. Does it follow that such a change on Parliament cannot be made by Parliament, as it may be said in physics, that a body cannot act upon itself? Such an alteration appears to me, neither more nor less than a law, and as such, to fall within the natural province of the law-giver, who, in this country, is the Parliament. How will it be shewn that these laws, affecting the Constitution of Parliament, are alone incompetent to Parliament? Our own experience has taught us the contrary. I dare say there are very few of your Lordships who have not assisted in the passing of laws precisely of this description, and, however warmly such measures may have been resisted or debated on other grounds, I will venture to say, there is not one of us who has ever heard or known this objection, of the insufficiency of Parliament, opposed to them. The various laws for limiting the duration of parliaments, for regulating elections, for altering the qualification of electors, or elected, for disfranchising offending boroughs, and communicating their franchises to strangers, that

is to say, for example, to the freeholders of a neighbouring hundred ; all these, and many more, falling precisely within the principle of this objection, have been passed, by no higher authority than that of Parliament. What are all those proposals for what is called sometimes moderate, sometimes radical reform, but laws for the alteration, for the total subversion of the Constitution of Parliament ? To me they have appeared little short of revolution, incipient revolution. Yet, I have never heard one of those, who with similar views of these projects, have been better qualified, than myself, by talents and weight in this country, to oppose them, object the incompetence of Parliament to entertain and to adopt these changes in its own Constitution, if they should appear expedient.

An alteration of the established religion, which has always been the work of Parliament, is another change, and a most fundamental one in its Constitution ; since the whole parliamentary franchise, whether elective or representative, is transferred from one class and description of the people to another. The whole

whole is taken from all those who possessed it, and vested in those who did not.

The laws so frequently made by Parliament for altering and regulating the succession to the Crown, bears a strong analogy to the case which is now objected to, amounting, indeed, to a total change in one whole branch or member of the Parliament.

This objection, then, cannot be maintained *simpliciter*, on the incompetence of Parliament to make an alteration on its own constitution, or condition; and we must come, in fine, to the single point which my imagination can suggest, as a possible ground of distinction, namely, the great and superlative importance and magnitude of this transaction. We have seen that all other cases of a similar nature, *ejusdem generis*, are within the acknowledged powers of Parliament, and the daily exercise of those powers. But this is a measure, we must say, of such transcendent importance, as to exceed the ordinary capacities entrusted by the Constitution to Parliament, and to which the inherent sovereignty of the people itself is alone commensurate.

I can conceive no other rational shape into which this argument can be cast; but is it rational in substance also; or is it not the most palpable and the grossest violation of reason, the widest departure from every sound principle in the theory either of this constitution, or of government in general? It would be strange indeed if this point of superior importance should serve my adversary, since it is the very ground on which I rest most firmly my claim of exclusive cognizance to the Parliament.

On what principle is the trust of legislation committed to Parliament at all? Because no people on earth, not even the smallest population in the smallest territory, could ever exercise a democratic legislation in its entire and theoretical purity. If we look back to that most antient and simple of all constitutions, I mean the patriarchal, or the government of families, which has been regarded as the first, and original model and archetype of all succeeding governments, we shall find that even these have rejected a mode of administration which it was, at least, easier to execute, within the walls of a single tent, or the bounds of a wandering camp, and amongst a few individuals,

viduals, than in any other more populous state. Authority was still deposited with selection in fewer hands than the whole even of these narrow communities. The heads of families; the chiefs of tribes; the elders; in a word, some select body or other, administered these small commonwealths. It would lead to unprofitable length if I were to pursue this reasoning with minuteness, as it would be easy to do, up to the conclusion, to which we all assent; namely, that the people of England cannot make law for themselves in any democratic form of constitution; that they are not provided or acquainted with any institution which should enable them to perform this feat of self-legislation, even if they were desirous of attempting it. They have no comitia; no assemblies of the people in Hyde Park, or St. George's Fields, to the decrees of which the millions of absent Englishmen, owe, or choose to acknowledge any obedience. And there being a physical impossibility to collect their voices individually, even if that physical and practical impossibility, if I may say so without the imputation of incorrectness, were not the weakest objection to such a mode of legislation, there is an established organ of the general

will, qualified by its frame and constitution, to apply the collective wisdom of the nation to its collective interests, and to administer the sovereign power of the state on this secure and solid foundation. The sovereignty of Parliament, thus explained, is in the end no more; it is neither more nor less, but identically and precisely the same with the sovereignty of the people itself, appearing in the only visible, tangible or perceptible form in which it can be recognized in this country.

It is, then, first, on the vices and inabilities of all other modes by which the voice of the people can be expressed, or even its opinions formed agreeable to their general and collective interests; and secondly, on the peculiar and approved excellence of the Constitution which we enjoy, that the authority and sovereignty of Parliament has been established.

Let us endeavour, for a moment, to imagine some better mode of collecting, in a popular way, the sense of the nation, on any great point of policy or law, or, if you please, on this specific measure. Shall it be by meetings convoked by anonymous hand-bills, in the fields
adjoining

adjoining to this metropolis, and directed by orators on carts, tubs, or other moveable rostra? Every one knows that an Union with Ireland, for the discussion of which such assemblies were to be called, would not be the first order of the day. The most pressing sympathies and fellow feelings of such a legislature would be for the suffering felons, traitors, or mutineers, in Newgate and Cold-bath-fields. Their first and second measures, in favour of the liberty and property of the subject, would be to deliver the gaols, and emancipate the bank; and they would soon simplify this intricate and complex Constitution, by uniting the legislative, the judicial, and the executive powers; as they would abridge the tedious delays of all those functions, by carrying, with their own hands, into instant effect, their own laws and judgments. I remember to have seen a Parliament deliberate in St. George's-fields in the forenoon; and I do not forget, that on the same evening I saw London and Westminster in flames. Shall the appeal from Parliament lie to county-meetings, called by the sheriffs, on the requisition of a few dozens of signatures; and shall the people of England be bound in this great interest, by a collation of
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the various and discordant resolutions, passed by a respectable shew of hands, at the different Georges and Angels of the kingdom? Shall the magistrates at quarter-sessions, shall grand juries at assizes; or, in fine, shall the church-wardens and overseers of the poor at parish vestries, supersede Parliament, on account of their superior wisdom and knowledge; and, above all, because they have received a more authentic and direct delegation from the people at large? Or shall we prefer, rather, those convivial parliaments which hold their sittings occasionally at the different taverns of this city? whose resolutions, moved in the form of toasts, are agreed to in bumpers; and whose laws, proposed in stanzas, to the tune of a ballad, are passed in full chorus. Is not this jovial system of legislation, a mere inversion of the good old Constitution, which, if it permits the electors to be drunk, requires the Parliament to be sober? But must we, then, to speak seriously, depose the Parliament chosen by the people, in favour of these self-elected, self-balloted parliaments, attended by every small minorities of that Parliament which was chosen by the people, after they have withdrawn their attendance from that Parliament

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to which the people sent them? In fine, what is to be the form of this Arch-Parliament, which is to qualify it better than the British Parliament, as it now stands, for legislating, just in proportion as the subject is of higher import and dignity, and of greater compass and difficulty, than those ordinary acts of legislation to which those high authorities are utterly inadequate and incompetent?

Is it not, then, manifest, that a legislature in which the sovereignty of the State is vested, because every other political body, known in this country, is deficient in the requisites for common and ordinary legislation, and because it is itself the most perfect model of human polity, in all matters of legislation, must be yet better entitled to preference and to exclusive and sovereign jurisdiction, in cases of great and signal importance, than in any other? It seems to me, therefore, the strangest perversion of reason, and the most palpable contradiction and absurdity, to place the incompetence of Parliament on that ground on which its sole and exclusive competence most firmly and securely rests; I mean the superior importance of this law.

Having

Having spoken to the principle, let us see how the question stands on authority.

I shall not encumber my argument with the authorities which are familiar in every mouth, to prove a position, not disputed in any quarter, namely, the general supremacy of Parliament; and I shall respect your Lordships' leisure sufficiently to omit the book authorities on this general but fundamental truth, although the passages I might refer to, assert distinctly, as your Lordships know, amongst other examples of the universal faculties of Parliament, its competence to this specifick measure of a legislative Union with other countries.

There are two sorts of authority: First, the opinions of learned and eminent men. Next, precedent.

To begin with the first, and to speak of the *responsa prudentum*.

To the learning of the corporations of Dublin, and of the freeholders of the county of Louth, and some other counties; to the authority

thority of some members of the Irish bar, I shall oppose the Chancellor of Ireland, and the Chiefs of the four Supreme Courts of Law in that country. I shall oppose the clear and unequivocal sense of the House of Lords of Ireland, evinced not only by its vote, but by the withdrawing that part of the amendment, proposed originally by Lord Powerscourt, which involved that question. I shall oppose the opinion of the majority of the House of Commons of Ireland, for I think myself entitled to claim the dissent of that House to this proposition on a fair and candid view of its proceedings. The House once agreed, by a majority, however slender, to entertain the measure; and afterwards rejected it by a majority as slender; for the difference between one and five hardly deserves notice. If to this equality of opinion on the principal measure be added the consideration that the opposers of the Union did not even tender this proposition to the House; did not venture to load their question, with that denial of the competence of Parliament, of which it had been found necessary actually to relieve the same question in the House of Lords, we shall hardly doubt of their consciousness, that in a balance trimmed so nicely,

this weighty point would have turned the scale against them. But as time adds sanction and reverence to authority, let me close this enquiry by opposing to all the rash and intemperate opinions, or rather declarations of opinion, which the temerity of party spirit, or a false and misguided enthusiasm, have dictated in Ireland at this day, the single authority of Lord SOMERS; himself, I think, a host, on such a question. If any man in England, or in Ireland, as has been often said of that great man, think himself a better Lawyer or a better Whig than Lord Somers, he is welcome to enter the lists; while I shall rest contented with this single name, supported as it might be by a cloud of learned, able, and upright statesmen, lawyers, and friends of liberty from that period to the present hour.

Let us now look at precedent. It is not to be expected that there should be many. Such transactions must be rare. It is enough for my argument, to say, that the only examples our history furnishes, of Legislative Unions, since the institution of Parliaments, are precedents in point on the question I am now debating; namely the competence of Parliament to enact

enact them. WALES and SCOTLAND have both been united to England by incorporating, Legislative Unions. In both cases the Parliament alone sanctioned the measure. The union with Scotland is, perhaps, yet more closely in point with the present proposal. Since a separate Parliament existed in both countries, and the respective Parliaments were the parties in the treaty. That treaty was negotiated under the authority of the two Parliaments; they sanctioned the conclusion; and they executed finally and irreversibly, that happy system, under which we now live secure, at the distance of almost a century.

Although our history cannot furnish many precedents of this precise measure, I mean, of incorporating Unions, there are, however, many examples of other proceedings, bearing a strong analogy to the present, and equal, if not superior, in importance. I mean those acts of the Legislature which have altered the succession to the Crown. I need not cite the instances of such changes. They are frequent in the History of England, and they all prove the supreme authority of Parliament, even in these highest acts of sovereignty. By what-

ever means such changes have been brought about; whatever has been the efficient cause, or instrument of such revolutions, they have all derived their sanction and validity from Parliament, the seal of which has always been resorted to by the new Sovereign, as the only effectual security for his title, whether he stood on a claim essentially good, or on successful usurpation. And the anxiety with which the many repetitions of parliamentary recognition have been sought after, by those who were interested in a new or questionable title, is remarkable on this argument.

But without dwelling on more antient examples, it is surely sufficient to recall that of the Revolution, which placed King William on the Throne, and the subsequent limitation of the Crown to the House of Hanover. Will it be said, that the declaration of King James's abdication, and the vacancy of the Throne, was a point of less note or value, or of a lower rank in the scale of sovereign functions, than the Union with Scotland, or Wales, or than the measure now in contemplation? Will it be said, that the whole transaction of the Revolution was of a lower or meaner class and order,

order, in legislation, than any Union, or any other national event that is either known or can be imagined. I do not fear that it will.— By what authority, then, was that great change in one branch of the Legislature, and in the condition of the nation, operated? To what authority was the Prince of Orange advised to resort, for the sanction of his enterprize and the security of his Crown? Observe the difference between the circumstances in which he stood, and those in which the present proceeding is tendered to Parliament. By the flight and abdication of the King, and the consequent vacancy of the Throne, an actual and practical dissolution of the Government seemed to have taken place, if it can ever do so, in any possible or imaginable case. It was in such a predicament, if it could happen in any, that the supposed dormant title of the people to administer the sovereignty in their own persons, so far at least as regarded the re-integration of the deficient and truncated Government, must have been awakened and called into action. That moment was, indeed, different from the present, in which we have every branch of the Legislature complete, and the whole frame of our Government not only perfect

perfect and apt to all its purposes, but in the actual and daily exercise of its functions; and in which we are ourselves debating this very question concerning parliamentary powers, within the walls of a subsisting Parliament, and in the ordinary discharge of our parliamentary duty. Yet, under the circumstances which I have described, what did the Prince of Orange resolve, under the direction of his whig advisers? Did he apply to the people at large in any new and anomalous form? Was it to county meetings, or assemblies in the fields, or, in a word, to any unknown and unusual organ of the public mind, that he applied to sanction his title? Far from it. Even the first Convention, under the authority of which he afterwards summoned the Convention Parliament, was composed, in the first place, of the House of Lords; and next, of those who had been members of Parliament in the reign of Charles the Second. It will not be said, that these persons had any specific delegation from the people, either for this special act, or for any other end; either express, by positive commission, or implied, by their recent election. A whole reign had elapsed since they came from the people. Their delegation and functions had

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had been exhausted and had expired long since. Yet, so much preferable did this approximation to the regular constitutional authority, when an entire conformity with it was impossible; so much preferable did even this shadow, this surviving flavour of the parliamentary character, which still hung about these relics of a deceased Parliament, appear, when compared with any new and strange invention for conjuring up the latent sovereignty of the people, and substituting some phantom and chimera to represent that sovereignty in the room of its only true and acknowledged form, I mean that of Parliament, that the Prince of Orange did not think the validity of a Convention Parliament, to be summoned by his new authority, would stand on a sure foundation, until its convocation should receive the sanction, if not of a subsisting Parliament, at least of a body as nearly and closely resembling one as the circumstances admitted. The Convention Parliament was convoked—and that Parliament enacted the Revolution—which, however, was hardly yet deemed perfect, until it was consummated by the ratification of subsequent and yet more regular Parliaments.

The subsequent limitation of the Crown, after the death of the Duke of Gloucester, was also the work of Parliament; and I believe so far from deeming that authority incompetent, or wishing to rely on any other higher or more transcendent power, none of those whig statesmen and lawyers who presided in every step of the revolution, and who had the protestant succession at heart, would have thought that great object secure, if the limitation to the Princess Sophia had stood on a decree of the people, conveyed by any other organ than precisely that which they employed, I mean the Parliament. If these great men, then, were content to rest the revolution itself, that vast and prime concern, embracing every other possible interest of Englishmen, on the single and perfect efficacy of an Act of Parliament, we are not to wonder if the same men thought the respective Parliaments of England and Scotland, the competent, and the only competent instruments to accomplish the Union between the two countries.

What overweening preference is it of our own times, or our own persons, that should make us thus fastidious in casting by, or of inferior

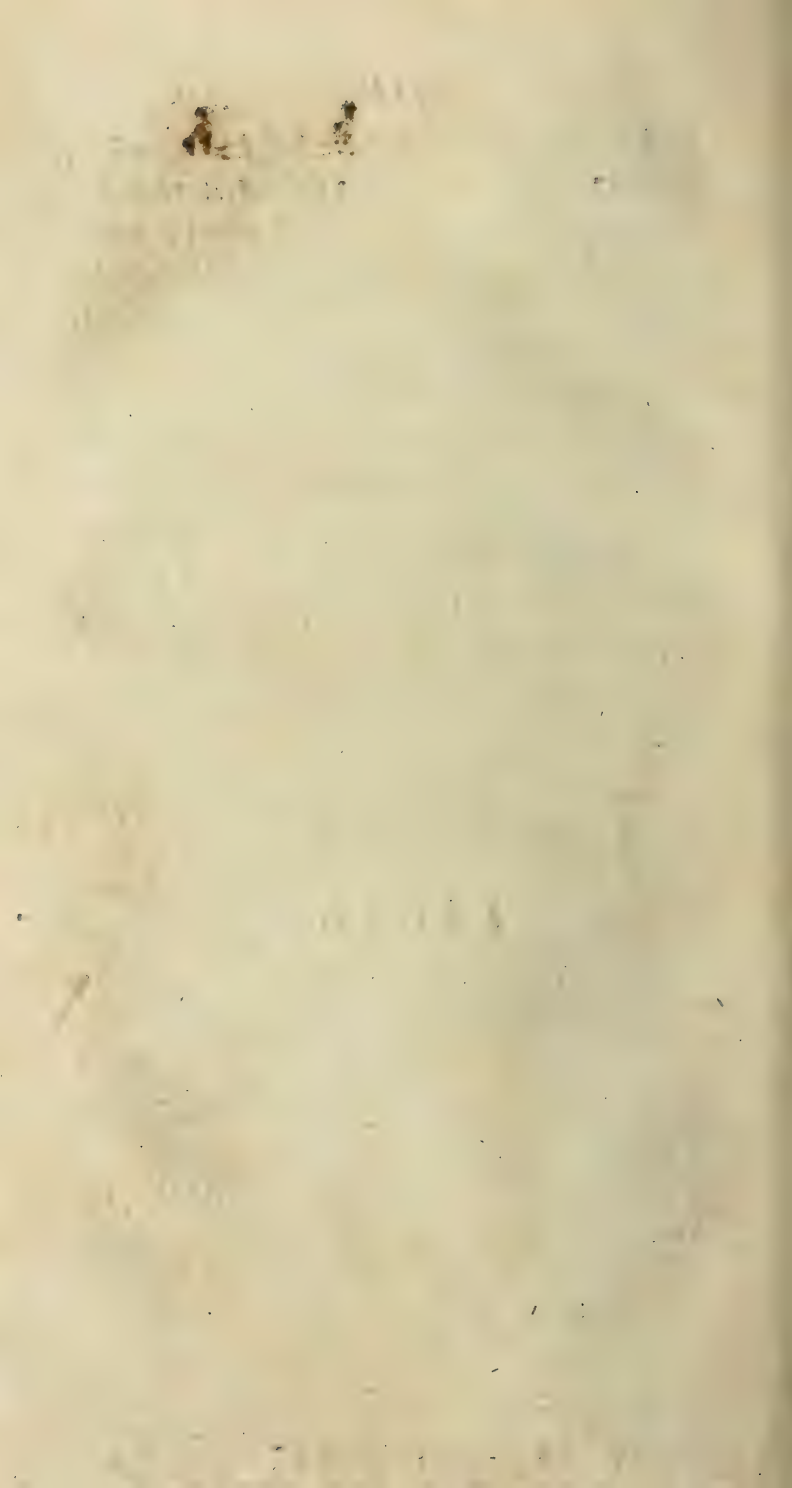
ferior and more imperfect growth, the constitutional whiggism and wholesome liberty of the reigns of King William and Queen Ann, to intoxicate ourselves and our country with that double refined, that sublimated and adulterated modern drug which is now poisoning the world. I own, for my part, that I like to see, on the liberty of my country, and your Lordships know the revered authority by which I am supported in that sentiment, that I like to see on my own and my country's liberty the seal of the old whigs, and am apt enough to think that counterfeit, which does not bear this mark. I am above all disposed to fly as from certain ruin, the spurious philosophy, the sophisticated, and fatal abstractions, which so far from lighting us to the temple of liberty, are but decoys to plunge the world into the toils of wretchedness and slavery. I confess, then, that I recoil with disgust and not without alarm, from every pretence for disavowing or superseding our established government, however qualified in time, occasion or limited purpose. I cannot think those men profitable servants of their country, nor do I think their country disposed to regard them as friends, who would weaken in the breasts of

Englishmen the native and rooted love of our boasted government and laws; and divert the settled allegiance of the happiest people upon earth, from the established sovereignty of Parliament, in which, however, is inseparably bound up the whole of the security, prosperity and freedom, present and to come, of the British nation. And I must hold every proposal to abdicate or surrender the sovereign power of Parliament, but for an hour, into the hands of any strangers to the constitution, that is to say, into any other hands whatever, as a mere fraud upon the people; as a gross violation of its most precious privilege; as a flagrant invasion of the dearest birth-right of Englishmen, which consists according to me in the right to be governed by their Parliaments, and by no other human means.

There are a variety of topics, as your Lordships well know, to which I have not even alluded, and on some of which I should certainly be disposed to say a few words; but, in truth, I have already abused your indulgence, not only much too long, but, I am conscious, also, much too tediously; and I therefore refrain—very grateful for having been permitted
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to state such reasons as have satisfied my mind, on the whole matter, that this measure is expedient in itself, and that Parliament is competent to execute it. I have expressed a strong opinion, that the Union of these two nations, already united by nature in their interests, must, in the order of human events, necessarily come to pass; and I shall conclude by a sincere and fervent prayer, dictated by the purest and the most ardent desire for the happiness of both kingdoms, that the blessings sure to flow from a consummation so devoutly to be wished, may not be long delayed.

F I N I S.

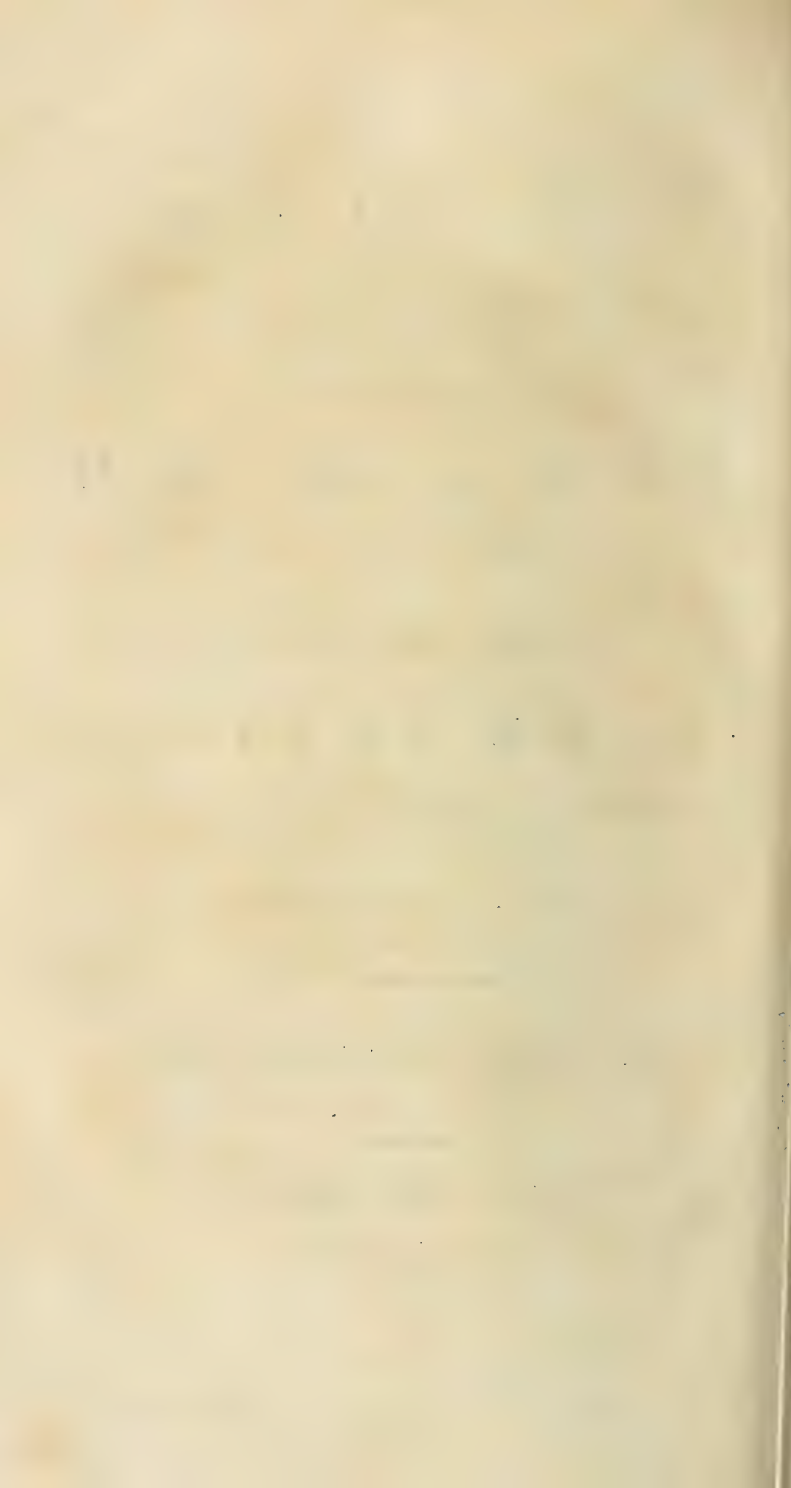


R E V I E W
OF A PUBLICATION,
ENTITLED,
T H E S P E E C H
OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
J O H N F O S T E R,
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND;
I N A L E T T E R,
ADDRESSED TO HIM
BY WILLIAM SMITH, ESQ.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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1799.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following Letter stands in need of indulgence ; and is perhaps, in some degree entitled to it. It was begun on Tuesday last, (the publication which it purports to answer, having appeared only the day before) and has been written so expeditiously, that the whole of the work (or indeed one-fourth of it) has never been at once under the Writer's eye,—nor had he even time for reading over his own manuscript ; but was obliged to confine his corrections to those which he could make in revising proofs.

The consequence, perhaps, may be many faults of style, and some repetitions ; owing to the Writer's not having been able to ascertain, with sufficient exactness, what he had already treated,—from his sending the sheets to press nearly as fast as they were written.

He does not, however, expect that this hurry should excuse him for faults, of argument or statement into which he may have fallen. He should not have ventured to submit his thoughts so hastily to the Publick, but that he had already reflected sufficiently upon his subject, to make him hope that expedition could do little more than affect the style ; a consideration which he conceived to be so subordinate, as that it might be well to sacrifice it to the desire of an early publication.

But it may be asked, Why the Writer has chosen this mode of replying to a Speech, which, as a Member of Parliament, he had the privilege of answering in his place—

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The fact is, that nothing could be more just or reasonable, than the claim of the distinguished Personage, to whom this Letter is addressed, to be heard upon the great question of a Legislative Union, upon the first opportunity that presented itself for delivering his sentiments ;—but for the Writer of this Letter who had already, on a former occasion, obtained a long and patient hearing, to have again addressed the House on the Subject of Union, when that question was not before them, would have been highly unreasonable, and presumptuous.

It only remains to observe, that the following Letter is not intended as an original argument ; or full investigation of the Question of Union. It is an answer to the Speech published as the Speaker's : in an Address to the People of Ireland, the Writer has gone into a more direct discussion of the question itself ; and thought it would be wrong here to repeat arguments, which he had already offered to the Publick.

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S I R,

THE Speech lately published as yours,* I had the good fortune of hearing you deliver ; and in common, I apprehend, with the rest of your auditors, regarded it as a splendid and convincing proof that your reputation for Commercial Knowledge is as merited, as it is high. Indeed, if the ability of a Speech were to be estimated by the rich abundance of information which it contained, the excellence of yours would not admit of controverfy ; neither can I altogether withhold from it the praise to which a judicious selection of topics is entitled ; and still less am I disposed to contest its claim to approbation on the ground of acuteness, perspicuity and logical precision ; qualities, in which if it be in any degree deficient, the defect is not attributable to you, but to the weakness of the opinion which it was your task to support.

But if, towards estimating the value of an argument, we must advert to the conclusion which it is intended to inculcate, and can pronounce it able, only in proportion as it is convincing, I shall be obliged to withhold the praise of ability from yours ; for though I listened to it with unintermitted, and unprejudiced attention, and with a mind sufficiently full of the subject which it treated, to render me the more capable of weighing

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* By Moore, in College-Green

weighing the reasons which it contained, yet I protest it totally failed of carrying conviction to my mind.

To this failure, Sir, you are to impute the trouble of my present Letter ; in which, without deviating from that respect which is due to you, I shall endeavour to answer the arguments which you have urged. I am apprized of the vast interval which there is between us, in point of talents and information ; but, great as it may be, I conceive it, on the present question, to be filled up by the superior force, and number of those arguments, which offer themselves in favour of the opinion that I have embraced ; and I feel a confidence, not so much in myself, as in my position.

I shall, in the following pages, aim at no stricter order than that which will arise from my attending you regularly through your topics ; and, agreeably to this loose arrangement, shall begin by noticing your first :

You set out by asserting that the adjustment of 1782 was a final one ; a position which I conceive to be as true, as it is irrelevant ; and which therefore I am not disposed to controvert, but only to explain.

Indeed, it is strangely usual to omit adjusting the meaning of propositions, before we give them our assent. I believe it is Locke who has laid it down, that an accurate definition may preclude a world of argument ; and, conformably to his opinion, I am inclined to expect, that, after having examined the meaning of the position which I have just noticed, we shall deem an attempt to draw from it any thing illustrative of the Question of Union, about as hopeful as the Lagado scheme of extracting sunbeams from cucumbers.

The measures of 1782 must have had reference to that, out of which they arose ; and the adjustment been of something, which had been in controversy : for I cannot conceive a settlement,

ment, without some subject matter for it to operate upon ; nor extend its operation beyond the limits of those doubts, or controversies, to which it was meant to put an end.

Now, what was the subject matter of the settlement of 1782? The claim of the British Parliament to enact laws, that should bind Ireland ; and the denial, on the part of Ireland, of the justice of this claim.

The right of legislating for Ireland had not only been, for centuries, practically asserted by the Parliament of England, but had been expressly recognised, and insisted on, by legal and constitutional writers ; and been by them referred to the principle of Irish dependence, and subordination ; a principle, still more mortifying to the spirit of this country, than even the deduction, of a right to legislative control, which it supported.

The pride of Irishmen was naturally offended, at finding it laid down by a commentator on the Laws of England,* that where this country was particularly named, or included within general words, there could be no doubt but she was bound by all Acts of the British Legislature ; nor was the jealousy, which this doctrine was calculated to inspire, appeased by the information, which the same writer gave them, that "it followed from the very nature and constitution of a dependent state:" still less, were they likely to be soothed by a review of the servile, and invidious provisions, by which the statutes of Sir Edward Poynings had degraded our Parliament, in order to rivet our dependence ;—or of the want of that security to the liberties of the subject, which the inhabitants of England derived from the frame, and limited duration of their Mutiny Bill.

The assertion of such claims on the part of Britain, and denial of their justice by the Parliament of this country,—the degrading

* Blackstone.

grading system by which, on the one hand, these claims were supported, and the impatience with which both claims and system were brooked upon the other,—inevitably produced a controversy the most momentous in its aspect, and to which the settlement of 1782 very fortunately put an end. I accede to your enumeration of those grievances,* of which, at that period, the removal was desired: you truly state them to have consisted of Great Britain's claim to bind this country: the appellant jurisdiction:† the provisions of Poynings' law; and the frame and perpetuity of the Mutiny Bill. The first of these grievances, (viz. the claim of Britain) was the grand point in issue, and to which the others were either appurtenant or allied; and as for the third and fourth, they formed no subject of controversy between the two nations; but furnished mere matter for internal regulation. In 1782 these grievances were removed; and I cannot but exult at our having then been freed from a system of control, too degrading and oppressive to this country, to be justified by that consolidation of the empire, at which it aimed; and which, if not yet so firmly secured as every true friend to British connexion must desire, is yet attainable, by measures which the Irish Parliament is competent to adopt, and which I too much respect the arrangement of 1782, to charge it with having placed beyond their reach.

I agree with you, Sir, that the adjustment of 1782 and 1783, was final; and that the Acts of the 22d and 23d of the King, by repealing the 6th of Geo. I., and declaring that the people of Ireland should be bound only by laws enacted by the Parliament of this kingdom,—formed a compact between the countries, which, without a gross breach of faith, Great Britain cannot violate; and of which Irishmen ought not to yield the benefit, but with their lives.

Therefore, if you shew me any breach of this solemn and final settlement,—any attempt on the part of England to legis-

* Page 9.

† Which second was a merely theoretical grievance.

late for this country, or invade the supremacy of our courts of justice, or our Parliament,—I shall join with you in protesting against the injustice of such conduct; but until this be shewn, you must allow me to doubt the pertinence of those reiterations, that the adjustment of 1782 was final, which principally occupy more than forty pages of your speech.—You are continually pointing to your premises, when I am looking for your conclusion; and wasting your time in laying foundations which will support no fabrick material to the present question.

Can you, Mr. Speaker, a man of undoubted and distinguished talents, mean seriously to contend, that the British Parliament in 1782, by disclaiming the right of binding this country by its statutes, precluded the Irish Parliament from deliberating on the expediency of a Legislative Union, and adopting or rejecting it, according to the result of such deliberation?—I am averse from imputing to you an argument, which strikes my understanding to be so unsuitably feeble;—yet find it difficult (excuse my freedom) to acquit you of having been rather profuse of irrelevant assertion, unless by attributing to you the design of perverting those assertions, and founding arguments upon them which a judgment, incomparably beneath yours, should perceive they never can sustain. I am driven to suspect, that in asserting the adjustment of 1782 to have been final, you insinuate it to have been preclusive; and that in settling the controversies from whence it flowed, (and which alone it could affect) it incapacitated one of two independent countries from submitting a system to the consideration of another; and disqualified this latter from investigating the merits of the plan thus offered, and adopting it, if it seemed calculated for the benefit of both.

To me it appears too clear for argument, that the adjustment which finally disclaimed the right of Great Britain to legislate

legislate for Ireland, and thus put an end to all controversies which had been generated by such a claim, did not affect the right of the Irish Legislature, in its wisdom, thereafter, to adopt such arrangements as circumstances might require, and as should seem conducive to the welfare of this kingdom, and the empire.

To me it appears like something worse than extraordinary doctrine, that the adjustment which recognised the legislative supremacy of the Irish Parliament, at the same time precluded it from exercising its supreme authority, by the adoption of a measure, which it deemed pregnant with advantages to that country, over whose interests it presided.

When the British Parliament renounced its claim of dictating to this country, did it part with the harmless right of recommending a measure to our consideration? Did his Majesty, in assenting to any of the measures of 1782, deprive himself of the innoxious privilege of suggesting to a future Irish Parliament, which he should assemble to consult *de arduis Regni*, the consideration of a measure which, to his royal wisdom, seemed calculated to meet the arduous situation of the empire?—Did the Irish Parliament, by the share which it took in the transactions of 1782, despoil itself of its deliberative capacities, and preclude itself from considering, adopting, or rejecting, the measure thus suggested from the throne? If so, the British Parliament, at that period, did more than wave its pretensions to superiority over this country: it surrendered a portion of its inherent powers: it cramped and circumscribed its own internal authority; and imposed restraints upon itself, which render it, with respect to Ireland, less free than it is in its intercourse with any other nation in Europe, or the world.

The King too, according to this interpretation of the settlement of 1782, must be construed to have parted (rather inconsistently

consistently with the duties of his high station) with an essential attribute and prerogative of that royal dignity, which is, as it were, the centre round which revolve the liberties of our Constitution; and the Irish Parliament must be assumed to have abdicated its situation, and renounced its right of consulting and advancing the interests of the nation.—I hesitate to admit a construction, from which such consequences flow.

The settlement of 1782 did what? It allisted the controversies which had arisen from the claims of Britain to a right of legislating for this country: a right, which I have your authority (p. 5) for saying, this country had not acknowledged, but had denied.—The arrangement of 1782 then, was merely the abolition of an abuse, and a restitution of the genuine principles of our establishment. Suppose this abuse had never arisen: that Irish Independence had never been invaded; nor the exclusive Legislative Competence of our Parliament disputed, either in theory or practice; and let me ask of any reasonable man, Whether it would be an infringement of this Independence, for Britain to propose (subjecting the offer to our rejection) a Legislative Union of these two Independent Kingdoms?—If not, can such a proposal be said to violate a compact, which has done no more (you tell us) than to secure and reinstate us in that independence, of which the same proposal would have been no infringement?

Has the compact of 1782 rendered Ireland more independent of Great Britain, than this latter country has at all times been of Ireland? and would it be any invasion of British independence, if we should propose an Union to the Parliament of Great Britain? No reasonable man can say it would; because to submit to the Legislature of a country, an offer which that Legislature may, at its discretion, accept of or reject, can never be construed into the slightest encroachment on the independence of those to whom it is made. Nay, such an offer is not only compatible with their independence, but even with subordination

ordination on the part of those from whom it comes ; and accordingly, in the reign of Anne, before the æra of Irish Independence, we find the proposal of Union coming from the Irish Lords.

Now, can it be said that a proposal, coming from the British to the Irish Parliament, is a violation of the independence of this country, or of the compact by which that independence has been recognised,—when the same proposal, moving from Ireland to Great Britain, could never, by any casuistry, be tortured into the slightest encroachment on the, at least, equally undisputed independence of that country ?

France or Spain are surely as independent of Great Britain, as this island can pretend to be ; yet I will be bold to say, that in proposing a Legislative Union with either of those States, though England might be guilty of gross extravagance and absurdity, she could not be taxed with impeaching their independence : Why then should she be accused of infringing ours, or of violating that compact by which it has been secured, on the ground of having offered that, which she might offer to any State in Europe, without incurring the charge of having encroached upon its privileges ?

But I am, for argument, supposing a case which does not exist : the English Parliament has made us no proposal.—The alledged violation of the compact of 1782, has consisted in nothing more than this,—that the King of Ireland has presumed to recommend it to his Irish Parliament to consider, and adopt, the best mode of consolidating into a lasting fabrick, the component parts of the British Empire ! In like manner, the King of England has ventured to recommend to his British Parliament, to enter upon a similar deliberation ; and I have not heard that that high-spirited nation has interpreted this conduct of its Monarch into an infringement of that independence, which it possesses as undoubtedly and securely, as Ireland can hers, by virtue of the compact of 1782.

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The proposal of an Union has been introduced in the most legitimate, and unobjectionable shape possible: it has been offered to the consideration of the British and Irish Legislature, by the common Monarch of both kingdoms.

In the year 1780 we acquired a Free Trade; and in 1782 we acquired a Free Constitution. Our acquisition in 1780 was not held to preclude a *Commercial Regulation* in 1785; * and why should our acquisitions of 1782 be held to prevent a *Constitutional Regulation* in 1799? It was indeed indispensable that the arrangements of 1785 should be compatible with the freedom of trade which had been conceded five years before; and in like manner it is indispensably requisite, (towards their validity,) that any Constitutional Arrangements, hereafter made, should be consistent with the Rights which this Country acquired in 1782; and should not violate the Independence which we then asserted.

If the British Parliament had attempted, by a Statute passed in England, to bind this Country to an Union, this indeed would have been to violate the compact of 1782: but what, on the contrary, has been done?—the Recommendation from the Throne involved a manifest admission of Exclusive Competence in the Parliament of this Country to decide upon the question; and the British Minister, in that Speech to which you so frequently advert, has expressly acknowledged the Right of the Irish Parliament to reject the measure of a Legislative Union. Thus the proposal, so far from violating the agreement of 1782, has afforded a signal instance of adherence to that compact, and solemn recognition of the Independence which it secured.

Let me now anticipate, in some degree, upon a topic which belongs to another part of my argument, by supposing, that instead of having been merely proposed, the measure of

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* For no opposition to the arrangement was on this ground ever made or thought of.

an Union had been adopted ; and by enquiring, Whether such adoption would be a violation of the compact of 1782 ?

A moment's reflexion will convince my reader—that much of the reasoning, which, for another purpose, I have had recourse to, will prove that this measure would involve no such violation.

For instance : Is England less dependent upon Ireland, than this latter country is on her ? clearly not. Yet a Legislative Union would not encroach on the Independence of Great Britain : then neither can it, include a breach of that compact of 1782, which its most zealous advocate cannot pretend to have done more, than render Ireland as independent of Britain, as Britain is of her.

But Union will diminish the number of Irish representatives. Suppose I should consent to desert the abstract question, and enter upon that which, regarding the terms, is not before me, still I may with truth reply to this objection,—that a representation proportioned to Irish territory, population, resources, and contribution, in an Union thoroughly identifying the interests of the two countries, will be sufficient to secure to Ireland, as complete a participation in the privileges of the British constitution, (and what more could her warmest friend desire ?) as is enjoyed by the inhabitants of any English county ; whose numbers would yet (if any one were silly enough to compare them) be found to bear no proportion to the sum of British representation.

Again : Ireland is not, by virtue of the compact of 1782, less dependant on Great Britain, than Scotland was on England before 1706. If an Union then would infringe that independence which our compact has procured, it follows, that the Scottish Union involved a violation of the independence of Scotland. But no loyal subject, or friend to order—will flippantly impeach the justice or validity of a treaty, on which perhaps
depend

depend the legitimacy of the United Parliament,—the authority of its statutes, and even the title of his Majesty to his Scottish Crown.*

By the Union, the number of Scotch representatives was abridged ; and I shall no otherwise answer the epithets which you lavish on an analogous system, when you describe both Union as “ a destructive and accursed measure,” “ a surrender “ and annihilation of our Constitution,”—than by suggesting to you the subversive consequences, which lurk behind a doctrine,—that may taint the Acts of the British Legislature for near a century ; absolve Scotland from its allegiance, and impeach the title of the reigning family to the throne of that realm ; or which at best will leave this great Imperial Arrangement, to depend for its stability on the frail basis of acquiescence, and of an insufficient and short-lived prescription, which we can trace to have commenced in an unjust encroachment on the rights and privileges of an Independent Nation.

The measure of Union can no otherwise violate that compact, on which you so much rely, than by trenching on the Independence which it guaranteed ; and if such would be its operation in the case of Ireland, such must it have been in the case of equally independent Scotland. As invectives are not arguments, (else a speech would be logical, in proportion as it was abusive,) I am sure you have too much sense and candour, to expect that I should give a farther answer to those epithets, which you have lavished on the measure of a Legislative Union. You do not need to be informed, that if Union were indeed the annihilation of our Constitution, the many virtuous and enlightened men who are friendly to it, would become zealous converts to your opinion : but those persons hold Union to include no such surrender ; and if their judgment be erroneous, yet they are to be refuted by argument, and not frightened out of their sentiments by mere vehement assertion. Let me
close

* Secured to the House of Hanover by an article of the Union.

close this part of my argument, by selecting a few passages from the numerous extracts, which you have incorporated into your Speech; and by subjoining a remark on the conclusiveness of such documents.

The first passage which I shall transcribe, is extracted by you (p. 7.) from an address to his Majesty, voted by the House of Commons, on the 16th of April 1782, and is as follows: “ The Crown of Ireland is inseparably annexed to the Crown of Great Britain; on which connexion, the interests and happiness of both nations depend; *but the kingdom of Ireland is a distinct kingdom, with a Parliament of her own, the sole legislature thereof.*”

Upon this latter sentence, you seem to me to place some reliance; but as it strikes me, without the least foundation. It is manifest, to any person who reads the passage, and has even a general notion of the transactions of that period, that those who penned the Address had no intention of insisting on the distinctness of this kingdom, or contrasting it with the situation which Union would produce; but merely meant to urge this distinctness, as an argument against the abuse, of which they complained; and to insinuate the injustice of their being bound by the acts of a Parliament, *in which they were not represented*: and that this is the true interpretation of the passage is so clear, from even what I have already quoted, that it is almost superfluous to support it by transcribing the next sentence, which, however, is as follows: “ there is no body of men competent to make laws, to bind this nation, except the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland; nor any other Parliament, which hath any authority in this country, save only the Parliament of Ireland.”

The next passages which I shall transcribe, are extracted from an Address of the House of Commons to the Duke of Portland, and of the Speech with which his Grace concluded the Session, and occur in pages 14 and 15 of your Speech.

“ We”

“ We” (say the House of Commons,) “ shall have seen
 “ this great national arrangement established on a basis which
 “ secures the tranquillity of Ireland, and unites the affections
 “ as well as interests of both kingdoms.”

“ Convince the people” (says the Lord Lieutenant) “ in
 “ your several districts, that the two kingdoms are now one;
 “ indissolubly connected in unity of Constitution, and unity of
 “ Interests.”

Upon these passages I would remark, that the language which they hold was encouraging and useful; calculated to promote harmony between the two countries, and produce that lasting cordiality which it proclaimed. But with all due respect for the Speech of a Viceroy, (which yet the Constitution recognises as the Speech of the Minister,) and all proper deference for the Address of a House of Commons, I would observe, that both the Viceroy and the Commons, when they travel out of facts, and expatiate in conjectures, risk falling into those errors from which no human creature is exempt. There is but one Potentate, that I know of, who claims to be infallible, and his claim, the tenets of my Religion do not oblige me to admit. But, if I be not bound to acquiesce implicitly in all the obiter opinions, which are promulged by a Viceroy, or a House of Commons,—still less am I obliged to swallow their predictions. When they turn Prophets, I feel myself warranted to doubt their inspiration; though, in the present instance, I chuse to shift from myself, on the Societies of United Irishmen, and hordes of Irish traitors, the disrespectful task of comparing certain events and doctrines which we have lately witnessed, with those predictions which foretold the permanent tranquillity of Ireland, the mutual affection of the Sister Countries, and their indissoluble connexion,—as the inevitable consequence of the arrangement of 1782.

The next (and last) reference, which I shall rather digress from the train of my argument to notice, is that which you make to the modification of Poyning's law, and which will be found

found in p. 24 of your Speech. That statute, you say, “enacts
 “ that no bill shall pass into a law in Ireland, unless it be re-
 “ turned under the Great Seal of Great Britain.”

This provision you state, with a triumph which I cannot understand. To me it seems to involve a signal acknowledgment of the frailty of that bond by which these countries are connected; and to apply a weak and inadequate remedy to the evil which it admits. What is the cure which it administers? Forsooth the responsibility of an individual to the Parliament of Great Britain. This wonderful *Nostrum* is to remove all the separating tendencies, and acrimonies, and eruptions, which may arise from the nature of our present connexion, and announce the cachexy of our Imperial Constitution.—No: I advert to the defect which this provision announces, and place little reliance on the cure which it provides. I consider the law as an argument for a Legislative Union, inasmuch as I do not estimate the vigour of a man, by the number of his crutches, or the stability of a house by the number of its props.

Having now finished my examination of those documents to which you refer, I return from that short digression which, in noticing the last of them, I have made; and close the answer which I have endeavoured to give to this part of your Argument, by admitting, in the very language which you have chosen to adopt, “that the adjustment of 1782 was final: that
 “ by it the Constitution of Ireland was fully and perfectly estab-
 “ lished; and that no Constitutional Question can exist, to
 “ interrupt the harmony of the two countries.”*

But, as the adoption of Union by an Irish Parliament, independent, and uncontroled, would not unsettle that final adjustment, which did no more than assert the Independence of that Parliament,—as the mode in which the measure of Union has been introduced, so far from assailing that “full and perfect establishment” of our independence, which was secured
 to

* Page 31, 32.

to us in 1782, has, on the contrary, at the risk of losing this great measure, most solemnly and explicitly recognised that independence,—as Union is no “Constitutional Question,” but an Imperial Arrangement *submitted* to the wisdom of our Parliament, and which that Parliament is competent to reject,—and above all, as I acquiesce in the proposition contained in his Majesty’s Answer to an Address in 1782, that “the constitutional connexion between Great Britain and Ireland, is essential to the interests and happiness of both nations,”—I am, for these reasons, unable to discover how that position on which you so rely,—that the adjustment of 1782 was final—is at all material to the present question; and I am ready to adopt a measure, which, without repealing that recognition of the Independence of Ireland, seems calculated to give stability to its connexion with Great Britain.

In denying the settlement of 1782 to have been final, it seems that Mr. Pitt meant to assert no more than I do—He could not mean to deny, that that arrangement put a final period to all British claims of legislating for this country, and all doubts respecting Irish Independence. That he did not intend to dispute this, he has very unequivocally proved, by an explicit admission of the Independence of our Parliament, and its competence to reject the measure which was submitted to its consideration—He seems merely to have deprecated a perversion of this truth, to the purposes of fallacy; and, while he admitted that the compact of 1782 was a final settlement of all controversies, to have denied *that it was a final abolition of the inherent powers of Parliament*: that it extinguished or abridged the deliberative or (internally) legislative capacities of either legislature; or debarred the Irish Parliament from the undeniable right of employing the supreme authority of the State, towards attaining the permanent welfare of the Empire—Thus, I apprehend, was all that he denied; and heartily do I concur in the denial: deliberately do I record my dissent from those
who

who pronounce that, in accomplishing an Union, the British or Irish Parliament would violate the final settlement of 1782.

I might not state accurately (as I have not the printed copy before me,) and therefore I do not attempt to state at all, the Speech of the British Minister: I merely suggest, that he appears to have made no assertion, *substantially* different from mine, upon this question. The immense superiority of his talents and political knowledge over mine, may have prevented him from treating the subject as I have done. He, for instance, may have dwelt on the presumption which arises, from what passed in the British Parliament on the 17th of May, 1782, that some further measures of constitution were then in the contemplation of the British Legislature.*

“The fact” (you tell us) “*seems* to be, that the resolution in respect to future measures had commerce, only, in view.”†

In the above passage you appear to admit some further arrangements to have been in contemplation; which, whether they were commercial, you can but conjecture, and we may be allowed to doubt.—But suppose they were.—Still the fact supplies this inference, that the compact of 1782 did not preclude the Parliaments of these countries from keeping up a friendly and federative intercourse, and entering into such new compacts as circumstances might require. And why not into political, as well as commercial compacts? The Agreement of 1782 had decided a point in issue: it had put an end to controversy, not to intercourse, between the countries; and they still, compatibly with the spirit of that contract, were at liberty to enter on any new treaty, political or commercial; provided, in concluding or abandoning it, the Irish Parliament was allowed to exercise as uncontrolled a discretion as the British; and, in short, provided the basis of the transaction was an acknowledgment of that independence which we established in 1782. But the Address of the Irish Commons to his Majesty, at that period, having (with truth) denied that “any other
“Parliament

* P. 19.

† P. 21.

“Parliament hath authority in this country, save only the
 “Parliament of Ireland,”§ therefore a Legislative Union would
 disturb the settlement of 1782 !—I deny the conclusion. It is
 only one of the numerous forms, in which the unproved and
 untenable assertion appears, that, after Union, the Supreme
 Authority would not continue vested in the Parliament of
 Ireland ;—and can have no influence on any minds, but those
 which confound Distinctness with Independence, and Union
 with Subordination. After Union, the power of legislating for
 this country would still remain vested in the Parliament of
 Ireland, if, at this day, the Parliament of England be that
 of Yorkshire, or the Parliament of Ireland be that of
 Dublin ; and, if the contrast between the number of Irish and
 British Representatives in the United Parliament, were less silly
 and delusive than I contend it is, still, of the inferiority on the
 part of Ireland I might say, as on another occasion you have
 done, that “if it created a *theoretick* difference in the consti-
 “tution of the two kingdoms, which renders ours inferior, it
 “is one, not injurious to us, but necessary from our situation
 “in the Empire, and which secures Union and Connexion on
 “a firm and lasting basis.”† With far more justice may this
 language be appropriated to the measure which I am support-
 ing, than to the more invidious, yet less effectual one to which
 you apply it.

Union would proportion Irish Legislative weight to the
 importance of this country, in point of territory, &c. and thus
 that inferiority, (which, when our interests were identified,
 must besides be uninjurious,) would be one arising from our
 physical situation, and derived rather from the law of nature
 than of convention ; but the modification of Poyning’s Law,
 which you extol,* for having put one of the co-ordinate states
 of the *Independent* Irish Parliament in absolute *dependence* on
 the British Legislature,—this statute, I say, without which

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you

§ This answer will also apply to p. 8,—where the same reasoning is
 insinuated in the following passage :—“While Ireland retains a Parli-
 “ment, she has the means of redress.”

† P. 24.

* P. 24 and 25.

you admit that the boasted arrangement of 1782 would have been imperfect, || lamely and incompletely achieves its purpose of strengthening the connexion, by delivering Irish Independence into the guardianship of a British Minister, and thus proportioning our inferiority, not to our relative natural situation, but to the possible caprice, or ignorance, or wickedness, or usurping policy of an Individual, or a Cabinet.—I will admit, what it might be disrespectful to assert, that the arrangement of 1782 was imperfect, (and if so, its deficiencies were ill supplied by the statute which I have just noticed;) but it, in my opinion, laid a glorious foundation for that measure, which I still conceive to be necessary, towards permanently consolidating the strength and interests of the Empire: it raised us from that subservient situation, in which England might have dictated to us the terms of Union; and by restoring or asserting the Independence of this country, it enabled us to treat on equal terms, and to dictate, in our turn, the only Union we would accept. I will not disparage that settlement which fixed the Constitution of this kingdom, by, on the one hand, forgetting that it has raised us to a situation, from whence we can treat securely and advantageously with the Sister Country; or, on the other hand, by insisting that it has paralysed our Parliament, and precluded them from directing those powers which a Supreme Legislature must possess, towards accomplishing what they deem conducive to the prosperity of the Irish People.

But, “if the work of 1782 was incomplete, why “were not the measures followed up to their completion?”* Why was not an Union then accomplished? many causes may have prevented it. Perhaps this was not precisely the further measure, which was in the contemplation of the ministry of that day: perhaps the prejudices, or if you please, the temper of the Irish people, were not then such as to promise a cordial reception of the measure: to have offered Union, when we demanded independence—might have seemed a sort of
jealous

jealous compromise, and brought a suspicion upon the project, as if it were something less valuable than what our Parliament had asked. In the excited state of the Irish mind, at that day, it might have been impolitick to have afforded them even a *laissez-passer* pretext for jealousy and discontent: nay, the coolest Irish patriotism—if an Union had been then proposed—might have plausibly, at least, objected to the incorporation of the country, under the relative circumstances in which they stood: might have demanded a recognition of Irish Independence, as a preliminary security for our obtaining Union, on beneficial and honourable terms, and meantime required a trial of the effects of this Independence, as a reasonable experiment, and one gratifying to the feelings of a proud and generous people. If any evils have arisen from Independence, yet before it had existence, they could not be felt, and might not be foreseen. The trial, however, has now been fully made. It is since 1782, that the Commercial Propositions have been refused, that the transference of the Regency has taken place, and that bills, for Parliamentary Reform, have *fortunately* been rejected, which, if they had passed, (as they might have done) would have sapped the connexion, by destroying the similitude of the Imperial Parliaments, and giving Ireland a Legislature, differently constituted from that of Britain. It is since 1782, that France has become a monster, devastating Europe, and manifesting such distinguished hostility to Britain, as calls upon us, to consolidate the defensive force of that empire, of which, you admit, we form “a constituent and inseparable part.”* It is within the same interval, that under French auspices, separatism has flourished so formidably in this country, and ripened to a Rebellion, of which, (spite of the “perpetual pledge of unity,”† by which we were pronounced to have been “indissolubly connected,”‡ in 1782,) the object was not to strengthen our connexion with Great Britain. It is since 1782, that religious discord has assumed a character of so much animosity, as to suggest, that whilst, on the one hand, it may, in our present situation,

* P. 26.

† P. 31.

‡ P. 33.

situation, be dangerous to grant, it may, on the other hand, (if a divided people is an evil) be impolitic to withhold.

These several facts and circumstances, and the reflections which they supply, may have furnished many arguments for an Union, which did not offer themselves in 1782; and, by reducing theory to practice, may have considerably strengthened those reasons, which existed even then: in short, there are a thousand obvious causes, which may have prevented the accomplishment of an Union at that period, and which it would be nearly as little difficult, as it would be material to enumerate. And, if after all, the measure has been too long delayed, does it follow that it ought in prudence to be finally abandoned? and this, at a moment, when the events passing in the world demonstrate its expedience, emphatically and clearly; and even render it doubtful, whether Union ought not to be adopted, on terms less advantageous than it is in our power to ensure? In vain do you ask “what reliance we can place “on the British Minister’s adherence to any compact, on “which he might rest his projected Union, if he has already “violated a compact solemnly made and ratified?”* Your question assumes that the agreement of 1782 has been infringed; a position, which I have denied, and, as I hope, disproved. But this renowned adjustment, (which you are mistaken in supposing that Union will disturb,) has showered “down upon us, blessings, trade, and affluence,”§ almost incalculable. After having begged to except from this list of blessings—the internal discord—the attempts at separation—the deep-laid conspiracies—the rebellion and invasion, which we have witnessed—and are still witnessing, and which have all occurred since 1782, I would express my doubt, whether these advances in commercial prosperity are fairly attributable to the adjustment in question. Without the aid of any adjustment, if we believe Rose and Chalmers, (nay, if we do not shut our eyes on an obtrusive truth) Great Britain has in the same interval, made advances as enormously exceeding those, which
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* P. 33.

§ P. 24.

she had made in former periods. We cannot impute these to any thing that passed in 1782. Why then should we trace the accelerated progress of Irish prosperity to the constitutional occurrences of that period? Events, from which might have been more naturally expected that domestic content, and tranquillity, which they have utterly failed to produce! Why may we not rather attribute such rapid strides to assiduity, to those causes, whatever they be, which have aggrandised Great Britain, and consider them as our portion of the common benefits of imperial greatness, and as a motive for strengthening that connexion, from whence they have flowed? From our free trade,† they may indeed be in a great degree derivable: but that freedom will not be abridged by Union, and was not acquired in 1782.

I have already protested against being held to any more strict arrangement, than a mere regular pursuit of your reasoning will supply:—I am answering your argument, and cannot, if I wished it, be more systematick than you are; unless I deviate from that course which you have prescribed, and to which it is my business to adhere.—Therefore, having followed you in your investigation of the adjustment of 1782, having digressed *with you* from the transactions of that period, and *with you* recurred to them again, I now accompany you to the discussions of 1785.

The Duke of Rutland, at the opening of the Session, recommends “to the earnest investigation” of Parliament “those objects of trade and commerce, between Great Britain and Ireland,” (you say “mark the expression,”) “*which had not yet received their complete adjustment.*”*—The meaning of these expressions is sufficiently apparent: they were made use of on the subject of *commerce*, merely, and involve no more than the assertion which you yourself make, that from 1782 “no advance was made as to commerce in general, except
“ what

† Granted by the British Parliament.

* P. 16.

“ what was done by Yelverton's Bill ;” * — the inadequacy of which you had shewn in page 30, and also shewed by your support of the commercial arrangement in 1785. And you must allow me to take *this occasion* of acquiescing in the truth of your position, in page 45, that “ to select general expressions made use of on the subject of commerce, and apply them to the subject of Constitution, shews no great candour in reasoning.” This doctrine of yours also applies to the observation which you make on another part of the Duke of Rutland's Speech, in which he states a “ common interest in treaties with foreign States, as forming a bond of mutual connexion.” † This passage you contrast with Lord Castlereagh's opinion, (in which I most heartily acquiesce) that the consideration of the federative relations of the British Empire, with foreign States, furnishes strong inducements to a Union. You forget, that the Duke spoke merely of commercial treaties ; and that (as you very properly remark) “ to select expressions, made use of on one subject, and apply them to another, shews no great candour in reasoning.”

With respect to your own conduct at this last mentioned period, far be it from me to make, what after all might be an unsuccessful attempt, in demonstrating your inconsistency, to detect spots in the political character of a man, so superior to myself. In shortly contrasting your past, and present conduct, my object is only to tempt you to revise the latter ; or, if I cannot accomplish this, then to lessen the weight of your authority against me, by balancing one opinion of yours against the other.

You admit yourself to have said, in 1785, “ that things could not remain as they were : that commercial jealousy was roused, and would encrease with two Independent Legislatures, if these did not mutually declare the principles where- by their powers should be separately employed, in directing the common concerns of trade ; and that without this united
“ interest

* P. 35.

† P. 37.

“interest of commerce, political Union would increase the
 “shocks; and separation of interest must threaten separation of
 “connexion.”* In vain, Sir, would you dilute the strong effect
 of these assertions, and soften the contracted colouring with
 which they relieve your present conduct.—On what occasion,
 and for what purpose, did you make use of these positions?—
 to shew that the two Legislatures should enter into a compact,
 (for this is what was proposed) respecting the mode of forming
 their commercial regulations. When you declared that things
 could not remain as they were, your meaning, exclusively, and
 evidently, was that such a compact was necessary to the secu-
 rity of the connexion: when you observed that the jealousy,
 which was roused, would encrease with two Independent Legi-
 slatures,—you manifestly implied that this distinctness was pro-
 nant with dangers to the connexion, which required the cor-
 rection of some imperial compact, that, qualifying this inde-
 pendence, should be binding upon both;—and in adding that,
 without that commercial Union, (which nothing but this com-
 pact could permanently secure,) the political Union would be
 exposed to shocks, which would threaten the connexion,—you,
 in my mind, promulged a doctrine, which was as true, as it is
 irreconcilable with your present opinions.

Any other interpretation than this, which I have given of
 the passages above cited, would render them impertinent to the
 propositions which you employed them to support. How
 then can you now assert that “things do not remain as they
 were,”† when you are aware, that no compact has been entered
 into? and that the Irish Parliament is not bound to conform
 to the British laws, which may be made respecting certain mat-
 ters of trade and navigation? or, how can you desire that
 things should not be modified, when you admit they cannot re-
 main as they are? ‡ and that the security of the connexion is
 endangered by the want of that compact, which, in consequence
 of the distinctness of our Legislatures, has been rejected!—

“The

* P. 45, 49.

† P. 46.

‡ P. 47.

“The passing” (you say) “of the Commercial Propositions into a law, would have completely answered all the purposes of the present project,”* (of Union :) without acquiescing in the rectitude of this doctrine, I may yet remark that they have not passed into a law, and therefore, that, even conformably to your own principles, a Union may be necessary.

But things, you tell us, have not remained as they were. “The evil, of commercial jealousies, acting upon the laws of two Independent Legislatures, has been remedied by the good sense, and mutual interest of each country, from time to time passing all laws necessary, to prevent the inconvenience of commercial jealousies.”† Sir, the danger is, that the exercise, by distinct legislatures, of their undoubted privileges, may produce imperial dissension; and that the good sense of the countries, in having as yet prevented the mischief from arising, has annihilated that risk, which springs eternally, and inevitably, from such a legislative organization, is a position, which it is more necessary, than it is easy, to demonstrate.

You seem, too, in 1785, not to have foreseen the all-healing efficacy of this good sense, when you argued so strongly for the necessity of a commercial compact; nor does it afford an uninstruative lesson of human prejudice, and inconsistency, to find a person of your distinguished sagacity and talents, in one place,‡ considering the Great Seal of Britain to be a better security, than the good sense of Ireland, for a continuance of the connexion between the two countries; and, in another place,§ preferring the junction, which this good sense, you say, has formed, to the guaranty which a solemn compact would bestow; though a casuist might doubt whether that roll of parchment, which you so despise,|| be a more frail assurance than the piece of wax, in which you place such implicit confidence. Some, I know, have pushed this contempt of parchment farther than you do, and even extended their

* P. 51.

† P. 25.

‡ P. 51.

|| Ibid.

their sacrilegious irreverence to wax. On their arrogance, a parchment, adorned with the Great Seal of England on its right side, and of Ireland on its left, can make no impression of respect. They affirm, (but they are calumniators of our Constitution) that Irish independence (which they admit to be remarkably well-sounding words) is no where to be found, but in certain rolls of parchment, called 22 Geo. III. c. 57, and 23 Geo. III. c. 28; and these, they are so far from respecting, that they quite mistake their operation, which they conceive to have been (I was about to say, *partly*) of a commercial nature, and to have erected an Irish aristocracy into a company, for exclusively carrying on the trade of Jobbing, and of Parliament. This commerce they indeed contend to have flourished under their protection, but doubt whether the prosperity of the country has advanced in proportion: whether the commodity in which they traffick—I mean connexion—was not secured as well to England, and less expensively and gallingly to this country, before their aristocratick monopoly had accrued; and whether, in short, British ascendancy might not, with as much advantage to both kingdoms, have remained in the keeping of an English Parliament, as been transferred to Irish Commissioners, to administer. Nay, they insist, that by the ingenuity of British Councils, this wax and parchment has been manufactured into a mask, beneath which, English Superiority, wearing the features of Irish Independence, has ranged without control, and been less susceptible of confinement, within the limits of that ascendancy, which, (I speak this seriously) Britain ought to possess: which belongs to our situation, and is necessary to our connexion; since I hold it for a maxim, that this country must be united with, or separate from, or in a certain degree practically dependent upon Britain.

In truth, I conceive you, Sir, in 1785, to have very signally recorded your concurrence in my doctrine, as to the propriety of such control. I mean by the support which I apprehend you gave to propositions that were rebuked by Messrs. Flood

and Grattan, on the ground of their “interfering with the Legislative Authority of the Irish Parliament,”—violating that compact of 1782, on which you now so much rely,—and “putting an end to the free Constitution of Ireland.”* And as, in truth, that commercial system went to bind this country in certain cases, by the acts of a Parliament *in which she was not represented*, (by pledging her to the adoption of such acts when made, and thus so far divesting her of all Legislative Freedom,) I am the more surprised at your constitutional scruples about a Union, which would not bind Ireland by the acts of *any legislature, but one in which her aristocracy, wealth, and population, were adequately represented*; and I cannot easily reconcile your affirmation, that not “an atom of our Constitution”† was surrendered by the plan which you recommended in 1785,—with your position that the system now proposed involves its utter annihilation. To me that measure seems somewhat more than merely eligible, which, by identifying even to vulgar eyes, the interests of both countries, will appease the factions, and promote the wealth and tranquillity of this:—which, instead of destroying the substance of our establishment, will animate its lifeless forms with the pure and genuine spirit of the British constitution, and give it a vigour that shall scatter blessings through this too-long drooping land.

But will Union produce these advantages to our country?—This, I admit, is the real question. The intrinsic merits of the measure form the true matter for our discussion;—to which the competence of Parliament, and the compact of 1782, are about as pertinent as Lord Macartney’s embassy to China.

You ask, ‡ what defects, tending to separation, the present state of our connexion involves? For my part I discern enow
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* See Woodfall’s Sketch of the Debate; and N. B. That these observations of Messrs. F. and G. were applied to the *Bill* of Mr. Orde, which the then Chancellor of the Exchequer supported.

† P. 44.

‡ P. 52.

to produce difficulty in selection, and tediousness in enumeration. If our Independence be real, I see a range of possible dissensions, as wide as is the sphere of legislative dominion in a state. I see that jealousy, which will be apt to mistake acts of animosity, for assertions of independence, conspiring with a thousand nameless contingencies, to turn this theory into practice; to loosen the connexion, and "strike the Crown into the hazard." If our Independence were merely nominal, the thing would be still worse: it might involve a dependence the more galling, and aggravated, because concealed: at all events, it would be a fraud; and would contaminate, and render odious, that connexion, of which it made a part; whilst it might expose our ostensibly independent Parliament to the distrust and abhorrence of the people; might bring their most meritorious acts, and those most necessary towards supporting the connexion, into suspicion, and make them pass for symptoms of corrupt servility. Again, if our Independence were, as it might be, something fluctuating between reality and name,—substantial on some occasions, and but apparent upon others,—it seems to me, that the likely consequence would be, its combining the mischiefs of both systems: in any of the three cases, I discern in our distinctness, (that is to say, in the theory of our present relation to Britain,) a store of weapons, whereof faction might avail itself, to wound and sever a connexion so frail, that even a pique between two individuals, on opposite sides of the channel, might give to its friends some reasonable ground for trembling.

If, in our present Imperial Arrangements, there lack these tendencies to disruption,—have the situation and views of France so little aided their effect, as to render it unwise in us to wrest from our foe, the arms which we had inadvertently committed to his hands? Have separatists at home looked idly at the weakness of our system, or profited by that weakness, in attempting its destruction? Has our populace manifested such a contented fondness for the present establishment, or that celebrated compact of 1782, which secured it, as that we need entertain

fears

fears of modifying it; lest we might thereby damp the *loyalty*, evinced by our liege pikemen, at Rofs, or Vinegar Hill?

The history of (would I could say the late) rebellion,—the descents upon our coasts,—the fatigues of our Yeomanry,—the stern, though necessary, provisions of our Legislature,—the scenes of scourging in our metropolis,—the multitude of our troops, with all the train of consoling details, which attend on civil discord and disaffection, accompanied with the comments of the empty, arrogant, and applauded Tone—will supply answers to some of the enquiries which I have made, and suggest whether the defects of our system be practical or merely theoretick.

But you, Sir, “can find only two defects even suggested: “the one of Peace and War, including treaties; the other of “a Regency.”*

As to the first, you say, that as the two kingdoms may happen to dissent from each other, so a disagreement between two Houses of Parliament may take place; and therefore the argument which proves the expediency of consolidating the Kingdoms, would go to recommend a consolidation of the two Houses of Parliament; *quod est absurdum*.

This reasoning appears liable to some strong objections; which I shall take the liberty of offering without much order,—suggesting them as they occur.

First. One Empire, with two Legislatures, is somewhat analogous to the idea of one man, with two wills; and is indeed little short of a contradiction in terms: therefore, that the legislative powers of an empire should not be scattered, but concentrated, is at least desirable, if not essential, to constituting and giving existence to the Empire.

But one Legislature, consisting of distinct branches, is perfectly intelligible in point of theory, and highly beneficial in point of practice.

Therefore,

Therefore, legislatively to blend two kingdoms, if they be parts of one Empire, would be to remove an inconsistency, and obtain a good; whereas, to consolidate two branches of the Legislature, would be to produce a mischief, and this without the pretext of having had any anomaly to remove.

The British Legislature is divided into distinct branches, because the community, which it represents, is split into different interests: but the kingdoms of the British Empire have but one interest, if properly understood; and therefore the necessity for division does not exist.

It contributes to constitutional freedom, to have the branches of a Legislature distinct: it contributes to imperial energy, to have the Legislative of the empire consolidated, not dispersed.

If two Houses of Parliament disagree—the effect is, that the measure falls to the ground; and in matters of internal regulation, this may happen without ill consequence; but how long will the Empire be, if in great imperial concerns it must remain inactive, paralysed by the disagreement of its two Legislatures!

Why are the Houses of the British Legislature kept distinct? In order to give them an opportunity of disagreeing with effect; in order to give efficacy and operation to their disagreement; and make each of the branches a check upon the other.

When you prescribe* separate Legislatures, for the British Empire, is it with a view to give efficacy to their dissensions? *If it be not*, you cannot support your measure, on the theory on which the construction of the British Parliament is founded: *if it be*, you do not much consult either the tranquillity or vigour of the Empire.

The British system of Legislative balance is compounded of three parts; and involves in it a principle as well of Union, as of Separation. It possesses, in the Royal Estate, a germ to the

the deliberations of the other two,—and middle term, which connects and consolidates them into one Parliament.—But in your Imperial System, I perceive the seeds of nothing, but wrangle and repulsion. It is composed of but two estates. It provides amply for dissension; but nothing for harmony.

His Majesty has, indeed, at the opening of the present session, in his Speech to both Legislatures, less remembered their distinctness, than that they formed a great council of the empire. But you condemn the Minister who advised this Speech: you applaud the Irish House of Commons, which declined the royal guidance to deliberation; and inveigh against the presumption of the British Legislature, in having paid more attention to the recommendation of the Crown.

One word more on this subject, and I have done.

You say that “ Theory says the two Houses of Legislature may disagree; and that theory *only* says the same of the “ separate Parliaments of the two kingdoms.”

I answer, that if theory had (which it has not, or they would not have been so divided,) affirmed that the Houses of Parliament might mischievously disagree, it would have been amply and repeatedly refuted by practice; whereas, if the same theory had denied that the Independent Parliaments of the empire might most importantly and alarmingly dissent,—the annals of 1785 and 1789 would be sufficient to contradict them.—Nay, the history of the latter year might render it doubtful whether you were warranted in pronouncing* that it was “ *unnecessary to shew that, by law, the Executive is, and “ ever must be, the same, and with the same constitutional powers “ in each kingdom.*”—Powers limited and unlimited seem not to be the same; and therefore the address of both Houses of the Irish Parliament in 1789, appears to me to have given us an Executive, with different constitutional powers from those, which were likely to be conferred in England. I say
from

from those which were likely to be conferred in England ; for the British Parliament had not as yet appointed any Regent ; and therefore, by our promptitude, we risked having an Executive different as well in person, as in powers. The Regency Bill, which was lately introduced, and in support of which you made the Speech which has produced my present Letter, admits that, upon that memorable occasion, the distinctness of our Imperial Legislatures did not obviously contribute to the stability of our Imperial Connexion. That (not declaratory but enacting) bill has, however, made many other inadvertent admissions, besides the deliberate one which I have noticed :—for having no otherwise escaped from one class of valid objections, than by exposing itself to others of equal force,—in its text and its annotations,* its provisions and its rejection, it reluctantly admitted—that the evil which it had recognised, it could not cure ; and that none but an empiric would attempt purifying an acrimonious habit, by clapping a plaister of basilicon to the eruption.

But, supposing the present state of our connexion to be defective, you doubt whether the defect be more than theoretick, and reprobate Union, as a remedy worse than the disease. You illustrate the question, by the case of juries from the vicinage †.—I have too sincere a respect for ancient establishments, to attempt impeaching this legal provision with respect to juries. But having got on what may, perhaps, be truly called the dunghill of my profession, let me suggest to you that the wisdom and liberality of latter times, guided probably by experience, has greatly detracted from the force of your illustration. The statute (of Anne, I believe,) which, instead of packing juries from the ward, directed them to be summoned from the body of the county at large,—gave a most christian-like enlargement to the culprit, or sutor's neighbourhood ; and resembled (so far as the analogy which

you

* The clauses which had been struck out in Committee, were printed in the form of Notes to the Bill, and were as much at variance with the clauses which had been let to stand, as these latter were inconsistent among themselves.

† P. 56.

you have chosen is just,) referring the suits of the Irish people to the tribunal of an Imperial Parliament.

Besides, the law contemplates, and corrects, those “prejudices, animosities, and friendships,” which you notice, and to which you suppose it blind.—Where there is reason to suspect that a fair trial cannot be had in the vicinage, (though that vicinage embraces the whole of a county,) the courts, to prevent injustice, will change the venue.—But prejudices, alas! will spread themselves from counties to provinces, and may taint an entire kingdom at the last! and if a suitor people should distrust the impartiality of the grand inquest,—how assure them, but in changing the venue, by an Union? But “local knowledge is the very essence of a jury’s capacity to administer its functions?”*—Be it so; will not Ireland return a pannel to the United Parliament? Is a jury of the county of Louth less qualified to perform its functions, sitting in Dublin, than if it sat in the town of Drogheda?—And may not the Imperial Parliament combine possession of local knowledge, with exemption from local prejudice? Or will you complain that, on this grand inquest of the empire, the representatives of its British, as well as of its Irish district, claim to sit?

But the British Minister’s object in pressing a Union is taxation!† the grant of eight millions which has been made this year, and which you notice, might alone be sufficient to refute your imputation. But suppose it were not; the man who after having observed, even cursorily, our history for some years back,—after having glanced his eye upon the present state of Ireland, and the world,—and looked as far into our future (civil and religious) prospects as he dares,—can see no motive, but a pecuniary one, for desiring a Legislative Union, and assign no views but of finance and taxes, to the Minister who proposes it, must have a mind very differently constituted from mine.—Blind and weak that Minister must be, who, in a period like the present, does not aim at rendering the subject satisfied and

* P. 57.

† P. 58.

and happy: who does not prefer possessing the hearts, to grasping the purses of the people: who does not perceive that, considering the spirit of insubordination which has gone abroad, and the jealous keenness, with which even slaves in government are marked, ruling powers ought, if it were but from mere policy, to pursue measures of conciliation, liberality, and justice: that before they aim at rendering their system profitable, they should take care that it is secure, and not, like Archimedes, be making calculations when an enemy is at their doors.—It is a libel on Mr. Pitt to say that the purse of the Nation is his object.—It is not he, that has raised the Empire: it is the Directory of France. It is he that has contrived to lighten the burthen, while he imposed it: and to spread and strengthen the commercial basis by which it was to be sustain'd. Under his auspices it is, that perpetual drains have been turned into mere temporary annuities; and Publick Credit has been upheld by a mode as simple as efficacious: that Great Britain has been at once diminishing her debts, and adding to her resources; and this in a degree so rapid and immense, that the incumbrances which she is paying off, she might disregard; and that her imports are become little else than a sort of import duty on her wealth. But the Minister, you say,* will not be contented with our power: he is also desirous to deprive us of our trade. These charges appear to me to be strangely incompatible with each other. It is as if a parson should wish to spoil the crop from which he was to receive his tythe; or a landlord to lay waste the farm out of which he was to be paid his rent. It seems to me, therefore, that you must elect between the imputations which you would cast on Mr. Pitt; and cannot bring more than an alternative charge against him. I will suppose that you have assigned him, as his motive, the desire of getting the national purse into his possession. Is it not likely then that he declares no more than his real opinion, when he represents an Union as tending to secure and advance our prosperity? Is an empty purse the mighty object of his financial ambition? Could he have the cruelty to forbid our putting a few pence

into the coffer, of which he held the key himself? Or would he prefer possessing all its emptiness at Westminster, to leaving it here in our custody, well supplied,—with the privilege of thrusting his hand into it from time to time?

From this discussion of Mr. Pitt's motives, you return * to the question of Regency; and it being my business to attend you in your arguments, I make no excuse for digressing with you to this subject.

You say that, upon that occasion, the difference between the two countries, which you admit to have been “unfortunate,” † and which arose from the distinctness of the Imperial Legislatures, regarded not the person of the Regent, but merely the limitation of his power. Though this were so, such disparity of prerogative would in effect have impaired a principle of our Constitution; and given the countries two Executives, instead of one. But you seem to me to abridge the true extent of the difference, which took place between the Parliaments at that period. You forget not only that the coincidence with respect to person was accidental, and therefore cannot be relied on as proof of conformity between the Legislatures,—but that, in fact, no Regent was ever appointed for Great Britain. His Majesty's recovery interrupted the British proceedings in their progress; and however bordering upon strict certainty our conjectures may be, and are, that the Heir Apparent would have been the person nominated, this will not lessen the truth or relevancy of my assertion, that the Irish Parliament named a Regent, before one had been named in Britain; and conferred that authority unlimited, which the English Parliament was restricting; and that in doing so they risked having an Executive different in person, and more than risked having one different in respect to powers. But they were not (you say) the Parliaments,—they were only the *two* truncated Estates, that differed on that occasion. ‡ In truth, the act of annexation has (*by an Union*) secured

* P. 60.

† P. 59.

‡ P. 59.

secured the harmony of the *third*; and so long as that state shall prevail, I answer for the perpetual amity of the King of Ireland and Great Britain.

But the proceedings of our two estates, you think, at that time were of no avail: for “notwithstanding what passed in
“ 1789, the act of annexation extending to the case of a Re-
“ gent, and the law of 1782, about the Great Seal, having
“ besides put the matter out of doubt, there does no real
“ difficulty exist;—and the Regent of Britain can alone re-
“ present the third estate of the Irish Legislature.”*

But spite of the efficacy of your argument to show the impropriety of what took place in 1789,—and spite of my respect for the waxy dignity of that idol, which was set up in 1782, to guard the connexion between the countries,—I should tremble to see that connexion await the issue of a combat, in which two branches of the Irish Legislature, unbroken and uncontradicted by any third estate, were in array on one side,—and a piece of wax opposed to their decision on the other. Nor does it seem that we differ in sentiment on this point;—for although you pronounce the case to be “free from
“ all difficulty and doubt,” yet, in order to

——— “ make assurance doubly sure,

“ And take a bond of fire.”

you support, not a declaratory, but enacting bill, which purports to remove those doubts, of which you have denied the existence;—or rather (to state the operation of that bill more truly) which, agreeing with you, that this was not a case of doubt, distinctly contradicts your opinion on point of law, and denies that, without the provisions of parliament, the British Regent is *ipso facto* the Irish third estate.

Be this as it may, however, I concur with you in the expediency of preventing the repetition of Irish dissensions. We do but differ in the means, which we deem calculated to attain this end. In the transaction of 1789, I see no more than a single consequence of the disunion of our Legislature—

— 1789.

a cause adequate to the production of many mischiefs beside. Whilst you, therefore, are content with plucking off the fruit ; I am rather for eradicating the prolifick cause : while you are making topical applications to the symptom ; I am endeavouring to remove the disease.

You affirm that there is already an Union between the countries.* Do you cite the Regency to prove that it is a close and firm one ? Did you support Mr. Fitzgerald's bill to record your opinion of the present solidity of our connexion ? And do you continue to trust implicitly in that recreant wax, which deserted its post so shamefully in 1789, and left the field open to our two Houses of Parliament ?

But, " Union is a merging of the Irish Parliament in the British."† No : it is only a merger of it in the Imperial Legislature. But suppose your position granted : what then ? This vile measure, forsooth, will leave us in as ill a political situation, as Wales or Yorkshire are in at present ! Union does not take away our Parliament : it merely changes the residence of that body ; and in regulating the number of Irish and British Representatives in the United Legislature, strikes that equitable proportion to the territory, population, and resources of the respective limbs of the empire,—which, while our Parliaments remained distinct, it was unnecessary to strike ; and which, when settled, will leave this country in as secure a situation, as any equal tract of territory in the British dominions now enjoys. But Mr. Pitt, in recommending this measure, has stated Ireland " as the " vulnerable part of the empire ;—torn by contending factions."‡ —Was the statement untrue in point of fact ? or immaterial in point of argument for a change ? For its truth, we have some bloody documents ; supported by the testimony of Hoche and Humbert, and an host of foreign enemies, and domestick traitors : we have the representations of Tone to the government of France, as to the state of Ireland so long ago as 1793 ;§ and the Report of our Committees of Secrecy, as to its more recent situation. To those who are friendly to our connexion with Great Britain, is it no argument for a change of the nature

* P. 61. † Ibid. § P. 62.

§ This appeared on the Trial of Jackson for High Treason,

nature of that connexion, that its present state exposes it to the foes endeavours to dissolve it? and is there no ground for presuming, that the measure which identifies this country with Britain, must render it as little vulnerable, as our enemies think this latter district of the empire to be at present? It is not the "Roll of Parchment," which will effect the change: it is the operation of those provisions, which that parchment will contain: the cordiality which it will announce, and restore: the liberal and cementing system, which it will legalize and introduce.

But Union, instead of assuaging, tranquillizing, and satisfying this country, "will deprive Ireland of the resident gentry, and "upper ranks;" (with their amazing and envying stock of good morals, and good example!) will rob "villages and estates" of their benevolent protectors; and encouraging land-soldiers "and pirates, will degrade the hospitality of the old mansion-houses into the niggardly penury of agents dwellings"†—It must be confessed, that if this be the necessary consequence of Union, it is difficult to conceive what object the British Minister could have in desiring it; or how the Irish Lords come to vote as they did on the first day of our session; nay, how on the same day there came to be a usurper on that side in the House of Commons. Our Lords must have been strangely blind to their own interests: our Commons under the temporary influence of an extraordinary delusion; and Mr. Pitt, who has not usually past for a silly personage, must be acting under the grossest infatuation. Apprehensive that Ireland is not sufficiently discontented, nor France enough disposed to take advantage of her discontents, he must be supposed eager to adopt a system, of which the manifest effect will be to render this country more vulnerable, and the Empire less secure. I shall not examine the details of that picture which you have drawn; and which I take to be a mere fancy piece: resembling nothing which Union would produce to Ireland;—and *into what a state it brings that which it has produced to Scotland.*

You desire me to look to Scotland, and Wales, which are united.* I do; and ask you, are they less free than Ireland,

or than England? Are they, in proportion to their natural advantages, less prosperous than we are? I have not heard of any suspension of the Habeas Corpus act in Wales; or of the stern provisions of a law for the suppression of rebellion. I have heard indeed of a descent upon the Welch coast;---and from comparing what happened on that occasion, with what took place on the landing of the French at Killala, I conclude that Union has no tendency to impair allegiance; and that the united Welch are as loyal as the inhabitants of disunited Ireland. But you ask, is Scotland, or is England herself, exempt from the taint of disaffection?† and you infer, particularly from the case of Scotland, that Union is no protection. I am content to meet you on this ground; and to assert, that Ireland has been the foy of conspiracy,---and centre of that sedition, of which the flames may, in a less degree, have reached other quarters of the Empire. Thus, if a comparison of the situation of the respective parts of the Empire proves any thing, as I admit it does,---it proves that Union would contribute to the tranquillity of Ireland.

It demonstrates what was too evident to need being shewn; that by diminishing the chances of separation, you will discourage *those attempts at it, which have disturbed our country*; and that the more complete is the connexion, the less easily can it be dissolved.

These considerations lead me to a part of this discussion, which, I confess, I do not enter on, without embarrassment.---To encounter you, on a point of commerce, would require uncommon strength;---and unfortunately my qualification is uncommon weakness. But I derive courage from the impregnable truth of the opinion which I am supporting: from the concurrence of Mr. Pitt, who recommends this measure: who pursues it, you say, with financial views; and whom you admit to be an eminently able financier;---which it requires no profound commercial investigations to pronounce he could not be, if he sought to carry a measure, detrimental to the prosperity of Ireland.

On

On the whole, therefore, I meet you even upon this ground, with much the same superstitious confidence in the justice of my cause, as in the days of chivalry would have induced me to throw down my gage, with a "God defend the right!" against some abler combatant than myself.

"How, or why," say you "should Union diffuse British wealth, or induce British capital to settle here?"* Let me select one from a thousand answers; and say, by promoting our tranquillity.

But how will it promote this? I have already tried, and may, before I have done, again endeavour to shew. Mistaken let me observe, that the question which I have imputed to you, withdraws us from the present enquiry; and admits that if Union promotes tranquillity, it must advance our commerce.

In truth this is an admission, which, *important as it is*, you yet cannot avoid making. You cannot avoid admitting, that without internal harmony, all other requisites to commercial greatness are unavailing: there can be neither Industry, nor its creature, Wealth. In the storms of a disturbed political atmosphere, Commerce will

"Forbid her gems to swell, her shades to rise,

"Nor trust her blossoms to the church-like trees;"

It is no declamation,---it is sound reason---to affirm that in establishing tranquillity, Union must so promote our trade, as that even supposing (contrary to the fact) it in some respects restrained it,---yet it must, on the average, be constantly beneficial. It is no proof of an argumentative, but of a little mind, to withdraw from this grand and general view of the subject,---to lose ourselves, and perplex our hearers, in petty calculations. Yet often---have I seen wide views mistaken for Extravagance; and the minute of Inquiry

whistled

worshipped as Wisdom and Discretion. It is no flourish,---it is a truth,---to state that by removing the terrors which obscure and blast our land, we reinvigorate it in the possession of whatever advantages Nature gave it; and relieve the British possessor of capital from all apprehensions of availing himself of those advantages, and settling it in that part of the Empire, where it will be most productive. I will ask any candid man, what, after Union, *political* difference there could be between Ireland, and the same quantity of British territory in England? or what should deter the capitalist from establishing himself in this district of the empire, if its *natural* situation made it suitable to his purposes? Will any man deny that Ireland is possessed of eminent natural advantages? or that hitherto some fatal impediment has prevented them from being fruitful? No man will be believed, who controverts either position. No man can expect credit, who affects to doubt, that the distinctness of the kingdoms, and consequent supposed insecurity of their connexion,—the convulsions which have depreciated the value of property, and damped the spirit of commercial enterprise and exertion,—and which having aimed at destroying the connexion, might be attributed to that distinctness, which rendered it insecure,—the views of our enemies directed peculiarly to this country, and involving a presumption, that they discovered some frailty in the connexion,—that these, I say, were causes, adequate to restrain our commerce, and deter capital from settling amongst us, --and that they are causes which Union would remove.

Observe the language which the Dean of Gloucester puts into the mouths of certain English manufacturers, who were opposing the puniness of their selfish details to the prosperity of the empire:—"They" (the Irish) "would run away with our trade:"—(You differ from this conjecture of the English traders:)—"Who" (replies the Dean) "would run away with it? or where would they run to?" "Why, truly, our own people" (the Irish) "would carry some part of a manufacture from us to themselves."—"But what detriment
" would

“ would this be to the Publick ? the people of Yorkshire
 “ have done the same by Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.” *—
 Thus this writer admitted (and the English traders urged) that
 Union would carry capital into Ireland ; but he wisely added,
 that this would not be a loss to England, but an acquisition to
 the empire.

Truly has the British Minister asserted, that the interests of
 the two countries should be taken together ; and that a man
 cannot speak as a true Irishman, without speaking as a true
 Englishman ; nor *vice versa*†. Union could not contribute to
 British greatness, without encreasing the prosperity of Ireland.
 The Imperial Advantages which it produced, would not stagnate
 in England : they must ultimately circulate through all the
 limbs of the British empire.

Having protested against their conclusiveness, I attend you
 into your details.

After enumerating the four principal manufactures of Eng-
 land, you affirm that the want of fuel will prevent their
 migrating into Ireland.‡

Suppose (however improbable) that they should not ; and
 what does this prove ? only that the capital which travelled
 hither, would employ itself in a mode more conformable to the
 natural soil, means, and situation of this country.

But you forget the comparative cheapness of labour and
 provision here. Undoubtedly, in England, a manufacture in
 which fuel was wanting, would not travel from the neigh-
 bourhood of a plentiful colliery, to a country where coals
 were scarcer, while the price of food and labour remained the
 same. But (not to mention that the objection will not apply
 to the chance of manufactures being established on our coasts)

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the

* Dean Tucker's Proposal.

† See Mr. Pitt's Speech, of which, since I began this Letter, I have
 obtained a Copy. ‡ P. 69.

the comparative lowness of wages, and rate of provision here, might more than compensate the greater dearness of fuel, and either afford, on the average, a temptation, or at least so equalize the opposite inducements in this respect, as to leave the adventurer free to weigh the respective benefits of an Irish and English situation in other points.---Nay again, these other advantages might so predominate on the side of Ireland, as to redeem the objection of scarcity of fuel,---though not compensated in the degree supposed, by the cheapness of that food and labour, which are as requisite as coals can be to a manufacture. ---Besides, what should prevent British adventure from putting an end to all your arguments, by finding coal in Ireland? It is true that in p. 69 you say, she has it not; but in p. 88, you acknowledge that "Coal exists in Ireland; which we have "never looked for effectually, but for which necessity may "compel us to search." It may be the mere want of capital which has hitherto prevented a successful search;---and the numerous other advantages which this country offers, might very probably cause its being employed* (by working our collieries,) to remove the only impediment which you suggest, to the establishment of manufactures.

"England" (you say) "finds a full call for all she makes : "every year affords an encreasing demand."*---What follows? a temptation to vest more capital in business : a temptation, which would immediately operate to send such manufactures to tranquilized and united Ireland, as her situation gave opportunity for establishing to advantage; and which, as by the Union the empire waxed more strong and prosperous, would operate still more powerfully in favour of this country; both by encouraging enterprise, and by rendering Britain too small a sphere, for its overgrown capital to move and act in.

The (constructive) bounty to the Irish manufacturer, of forty shillings on every ton of imported iron, has not brought capital into Ireland.†—Is your inference that Union may not introduce it?—I, for my part, can conceive that conspiracy defeated—
property

property secured---the connexion strengthened---the people conciliated---the country tranquilized---the enemy baffled in all attempts at separation---might operate more effectually to bring capital into Ireland, than even a bounty of forty shillings a ton on imported iron. Then, indeed, this bounty might have its additional (though comparatively puny) effect, and tend to induce the settlement of a manufacture here.---But after Union “ this bounty will be extinguished :” * Not abruptly ; or to the discouragement of trade. The system of protecting duties, according to the best commercial authorities, is founded on an erroneous principle ; but it will not follow that what it was injudicious to establish, it will therefore be wise too suddenly to demolish ; and therefore you very truly state that the articles of Union merely propose a *possible period* at which those duties are to cease. † ---Dismiss your fears---that “ Individuals will look to winding up their business, in order to “ withdraw their capital against that period.” ‡ ---They will be content to have trade nursed as long as it continues weak ; and will not prepare to withdraw their capital from a manufacture, because it is likely soon to throw away its staff, and cease to lean on the protection which it has ceased to want. ---“ We import iron at 12s. 6d. : Britain imports it at nearly “ 3l. ; and such import duty on this raw material, is fitted “ to our infant state.” § If you be warranted in this last assertion, which I do not mean to controvert, I must, however, on that very account, dissent from what you add ; and deny that “ every man concerned in the iron manufacture here, “ must expect the United Parliament will put these duties “ on a level.” || If the Imperial Parliament have (as it may have) a discretion on this point,—the presumption is, that it will so regulate, between Britain and Ireland, the import duties on the raw materials of manufacture, as to proportion them to the maturity or infancy of these states. Even suppose finance to be the object of the Minister, yet to make Ireland productive, he must make it affluent : to make the empire thrive and flourish in all its parts, he must promote the prosperity

* P. 69.

† P. 92.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid.

prosperity of its Irish limb; and consequently he will adopt measures, that shall foster our manufactures, and encourage loose capital to fix itself amongst us.

The same reasoning will apply to what you say, with respect to farmers. "These," you observe, "must look with uncertainty to the continuance of the corn bounties; and expect that the principles, on which those bounties have been discontinued from one part of Ireland to another, and from the whole of it to Dublin, will be extended, on a similar reasoning, by the United Parliament, to the whole of the united Empire."* You, Sir, I recollect, supported the discontinuance of those corn bounties: I must presume that you suffered them to remain, until the farmer had ceased to require this encouragement; nor do I suppose, that an united Parliament would extend the like discontinuance to the whole of the united Empire, until agriculture, grown more vigorous, no longer wanted such support.

Much of what you urge, appears to me to be objectionable in one of the following points of view: it either merely goes to shew what the terms of Union should provide; or what ought to be the future conduct of the Imperial Legislature; (and therefore would be fit matter to offer to the united Parliament, or to our's, when the terms of Union were discussing;)—or, secondly, your arguments rest on the sophistical assumption, that the situation of the countries, when united, will remain the same which it is, while they are distinct:—and thus you debate the question upon false premises, and upon a supposition of circumstances, which will not then exist.

Of the first description, are your reasonings in page 93, and 110. The first of which might have great weight with the united Parliament, or with the Commissioners, whose province it was to arrange the terms,—to shew to them, that different systems of taxation should be pursued here, and in Great Britain; and the second might, in the same place, be equally efficacious,

cious, to prove that some special measures should be adapted, towards securing the purity of our elections of members to the Imperial Parliament. Of the second description is what you urge in page 70 ; where, because the English trader has now the Irish market at his door, you conclude, he will after Union continue to possess it ; and found, on this hypothesis, an argument against the measure. ¶

Your premises in page 72, I better understand, than what is the conclusion, which you would deduce from them. You state the export of woollen cloth from Ireland to have diminished so considerably within this century, that in the last year it amounted to little more than one-tenth of what it had been in 1698. This merely proves that, of which we were not ignorant, and which seems not very much to the purpose, that the line of Irish trade has changed. Linen has, in the interval, become our staple, and its export, as you inform us,* was in 1796---eighty-eight times greater as to quantity, and one hundred and thirty-seven times greater as to value, than it had been in 1700.

But how does this prove that Union might not bring over British capital, to establish the woollen manufacture? You say† we put down our woollen trade to oblige England. If so, with the assistance of her capital, we may take it up again, without fear of displeasing a country from which we shall have ceased to be distinct : whose jealousies, by Union, we shall have swept away ; and whose interests we shall have identified with our own. And here permit me to confess a difficulty, which I have in reconciling your assertion,‡ that the woollen manufacture cannot travel into Ireland,---with your statement, that the value of our woollen export was 110,000*l.* a hundred years ago,---and that even under the disadvantages of our present dearth of capital, woollen and cotton manufactures have been established successfully near Cork.¶

Suppose,

¶ I am not overlooking this, that, by Union, the market of each country will be opened to the other : I mean only to say that when trade is advanced in this country, the Irish consumer may be supplied at home.

* P. 105. † P. 83. ‡ P. 62, 72. § P. 81. || P. 91.

Suppose, however, that this should not be so:---that the great encrease of agriculture, and of the linen manufacture, giving a greater profit in land than sheep afford,* the consequence should be, that the British Settlers would not turn their capital to the woollen trade; but would engage in tillage, or the linen trade, or fatten pork for the provision trade, (as you say they have begun to do in England;†) or enter upon any other commerce, more congenial to the circumstances, or habits of this country. What difference would this make? the object is that capital should be introduced into Ireland: not that it should be employed in this or that particular way. Capital (next to tranquillity) is the great commercial want of this country; and capital, by introducing expensive machinery, would remove that obstacle to the establishment of the cotton trade here, which you state the great use of machinery in that manufacture to produce.‡—As to the ineffectual operation of Arkwright's patent as a bounty, I have already remarked, with respect to the constructive bounty on imported iron, that the disturbed state of Ireland, and precariousness of its connexion, (as well as those habits of distinctness, which discouraged the indiscriminate dissemination of capital through the entire Empire,) supplied dissuatives, more than sufficient to counter-vail the effect of these light pecuniary inducements: and if Arkwright's patent has expired in England,---yet let Union repeal the patent of Irish jacobinism and sedition,—and I defy the effects of the ceasing of this bounty. In 1785, the English cotton manufacturers “were under great anxiety and uneasiness, lest the Irish,” (in consequence of an arrangement which partially and inadequately achieved the commercial effects of Union,) “should draw over all their workmen, all their trade, and all their capitals; and be able to undersell them in their own markets, by at least 13l. per cent.”§ It is probable that these apprehensions were exorbitant; but it is also likely that they were not altogether destitute of foundation:---and how strangely do they contrast with your exclamations, against the absurdity of supposing that the cotton manufacture might, after Union, be established here!

As

* P. 72.

† P. 99.

‡ P. 73.

§ P. 74.

As to linen, you admit it to be "an article, which, if British capital could be induced over, would very obviously invite it."*—But could not British capital be induced to settle here? you answer no; because scarcely any has settled amongst us yet.—This indeed is a reason for deploring that, so long as Ireland remains in *Rauque*, English wealth will overflow its banks for her enrichment; but it would be tedious to repeat what I have already stated,—the very adequate preventives to the importation of British Capital,—which our distinctness furnished, and which our Union must remove: it would be tiresome and superfluous to insist upon the impossibility of shewing any sufficient cause, (for its scarcity will not be urged,) which, after Union, could restrain British Capital from pouring into Ireland.

But it is mere parade, you think, to tell us that, in consequence of this measure, we shall participate fully in the wealth and commerce of Great Britain. We are already as free to trade to all the world as she is.† Yes:—on our *no* capital, and our *no* industry, we are at liberty to trade with all the world; and keeping civil and religious discord for our home consumption, may export our traitors to Port St. George, and deal in recruits with Prussia.

"What port in the known world can a British ship go to from Britain, that an Irish ship cannot go with the same cargo from Ireland? What article can a British ship import into Britain or Ireland, that an Irish ship cannot import equally into Ireland or Britain? What manufacture can Britain establish or encourage, which Ireland is not equally free to do? If new sources of trade shall be opened by conquest or by treaty, do they not belong equally, and at the same instant, to Ireland?"‡ I have adopted literally your own expressions; and now would ask you, if your list of questions be not a list of reasons, Why, after Union, British capital should be vested here? more especially if that country be, by nature, advantageously situated for trade, (and that it is so, universally,

* P. 75.

† P. 77.

‡ Ibid.

eminently, will not be denied,)—if the rate of labour and price of provisions be lower here than they are in England,—and if British capital be grown too bulky for the present limits of its exertion.

In page 79, you proceed to shew that our commercial intercourse with England is in a higher degree beneficial to that country, than to us. The evidence which you adduce of this, does not thoroughly bear you out :—for the statement, which you take from the Custom-house books, leaves a balance against Britain; and as “the Custom-house value” (you say*) “serves every purpose of proportion or comparison,” it seems as if you might have abided by it on this question of *comparison* : more particularly as it is the proof to which (p. 90.) you have resorted, to shew how good a customer this island is to Britain. To me, however, this adjustment of benefits seems so little pertinent to the present enquiry,—and I am so persuaded that the countries are mutually of incalculable value to each other,—that I shall not enter farther into the discussion.

I might perhaps, upon the same ground, decline reviewing your enquiry whether our linen trade depends on the British Parliament; † but yet must be permitted to attend you, shortly, through this part of your investigation.

At first, (seemingly admitting that we are indebted to Britain for this manufacture,) you say that she is bound by compact to encourage our linen trade. I am sure she is bound by interest to encourage this, and every other Irish fabrick; and I believe she sees what is her true interest in this respect :—but what was the nature of this compact, or when or where it was entered into, you have not informed us; and I, for my part, do not know.

The British measures which protect our linen trade, are, first their duties on the foreign linens; and secondly, their bounty on the export of Irish linens. Does not the continuance of these measures depend on the British Parliament? How then
can

* P. 90.

† P. 2.

can it be denied that our linen trade is fostered by their protection? But neither duties nor bounties were given for a¹. To enquire scrupulously into this would, I think, be very childish. Facts and consequences are obvious; but motives are more abstruse; and here the question is more as to the utility of the grant, than the generosity of the grantor. Now as to the value of a concession, affecting that linen, which, according to Mr. Pitt, constitutes four-fifths, and according to you, about one half,* of our exports to all the world, no reasonable doubt can be entertained; and as to what you state, p. 85, in disparagement of British kindness, it seems to me to prove no more than this, that while she was encouraging our linen manufacture, she also tried to serve her own envying trade.

I beg to decline following you in your enquiry into the respective powers of Britain and Ireland, to hurt each other by a war of duties and prohibitions. You ~~are~~ yourself that it is an unpleasant discussion; and I admit, that so long as the two countries remain *distinct*, they have the power of interchanging injuries so material, that it is not worth enquiring which could do most mischief to the other; but would be better to deprive both of their noxious powers, and preclude all wars of duties and prohibitions, by an *Union*.

But Union, by encreasing the number of absentees, would injure the trade and manufactures of Ireland! † Prove this to the British Minister, and I will answer for his abandoning the measure. But if it does not “take a great portion of the “men of property to England,” and replaces those it takes, by an useful description of persons, the ground of your apprehension about our trade will be removed: “No absentee” (you say) “can expect to be elected a member of the United “Parliament; and every member must be a man of considerable property.” ‡—Is not the necessary inference from your own statements this,—that if a seat in the United Parliament shall be, as it must be, an object of ambition,—an inducement will be held out to men of considerable property to

* P. 86. † P. 91. ‡ Ibid.

reside in Ireland?—Let me briefly add upon this subject, that Union has not hurt the trade or manufactures of Scotland. You quote,† with considerable triumph, the language of the British Minister. He has most frankly and liberally said that, until lately, the system of Britain to this country “had been harsh, and unjust; and as impolitick as it was oppressive.”—Will Britain renew the conduct from which she had departed, and which her government has so described? Will any Minister, though he was no partial friend to Ireland, resume a policy which Lord Grenville has acknowledged to have been “absurd, as well as barbarous;” and which “however it might have contributed” (says Mr. Pitt) “to the partial benefit of districts in Britain, promoted not the real strength of the Empire?”—Thus does not the policy which Britain has fully recognised,—or, if any man prefers a more jealous and invidious epithet,—does not British selfishness afford a guaranty for British kindness?—and need we fear an Union, with an adequate Irish Representation?—Why call our hundred Representatives a mockery?§ Would their voices be more feeble than those of the Yorkshire members? Would their sentiments be less attended to? Would their local knowledge be more neglected? Why idly contrast the Irish with the British members,—when they are the indiscriminate representatives of a cemented Empire?—When the prosperity of Ireland is the aggrandizement of that Britain, over whose interests you suppose the 558 will so closely watch?—May not an Irish member share in, or even guide the councils of the Empire? I shall not dwell on such a man’s predilection for his country, for his duty undoubtedly would be impartially to consult the interests of the whole United State; but at least Ireland would not suffer under such an administration.

But admitting that articles might be devised to secure the Irish trade and purse,|| (against those whose interest it is to protect both,) in the alledged omnipotence of Parliament you discern

† P. 94. § P. 95. || P. 95 and 96.

discern a power, to defeat or mutilate this compact. I entreat me, if I say, that such reasoning is unworthy of you. It toots *inter apices juris*, in order to perch on a supposition, subverted in its consequences, and refuted by experience. "The Imperial Legislature" (as I have on a former occasion stated,) "may be competent to disfranchise Wales, or Yorkshire, or to violate the terms on which the Sixty Counties first have been united; but I see no moral possibility of their assuming their transcendant authority to such a purpose." * By a maxim of the constitution, the King can do no wrong, and less can that Legislature, of which he but constitutes a part; and if we are to ramble into the boundless regions of abstract possibility, I will reply, that substantially to violate the articles of the Union, would be to subvert the Imperial Constitution, and be one of those extreme and not supposable cases, which might absolve the Irish subject from his allegiance, and justify an appeal from the Legislature to the sword.

But we are to look to Scotland, † in vindication of your cause. — I imagine myself to have been one of the first, to whom it fell to expose the absurdity of alledging the Salt Tax, as an infringement of the Scotch treaty of Union. The task was free from difficulty; and was performed by a short quotation from the histories of that period. ‡ But the violation on which you chuse to rely, is not the tax on salt, but upon income. In urging this objection, you desert the spirit, in order to fasten on the letter of the treaty. I answer by observing shortly, 1st, that all taxes must ultimately affect income of every kind; and therefore, if your reasoning were well-founded, there would be but one way of evincing a violation of the Scottish Union, viz. by abstaining from taxing Scotland altogether: 2dly, the very spirit and object of that provision in the treaty, which you notice, — the very end which the Scotch nation must have proposed to itself in entering it, was that which is accomplished by the Income Tax: namely, the taxing Scotland in proportion to its means, and fixing between the contribution of the two countries, the true ratio

(but)

* An Address to the People of Ireland.

† P. 96.

‡ Address, p. 91.

that there was between their wealth and income. 3dly, the recent exigencies of that united kingdom, of which North Britain is an integral part, imperiously demanded of the Scots, as they tendered their existence, to contribute to its preservation.

I shall not follow you in your examination of the effects of Union upon Cork. That quarter of the kingdom is probably best acquainted with its own interests; and entertains an opinion different from yours. I shall content myself by answering the question, and the remarks, which you apply to this part of the discussion.

You ask "what could induce the establishment of a dock-yard, after a Union, more than before?"*—The abolition of all fears and jealousies, that were the creatures of our distinctness: the abrogation of all maxims of suspicious policy: the intimate blending and identification of the two countries: the taking away from Britain every question upon the subject of where she should establish a dock-yard,—except the single one of—-which was the best naval station?

In order to console Cork, however, for the disappointment which you predict, you remark that no trade exists where great dock-yards are established.—I do not, for my part, know how the fact may be; but supposing it to be as you state it, I presume other adequate causes could be assigned for that want of trade, which I am unable to see how the establishment of a dock-yard should produce.

But we should not address ourselves to Cork; we should speak to Ireland. You do so, when you ask, if we "want to be better than well?"† I protest if we be well, the symptoms of our political health are very strange ones. I speak not of that late rebellion, which you may tell me was but a crisis, that has operated to throw off impurities, and restore the vigour of our constitution. I speak of those military escorts which attend our judges round their circuits, to protect them

* P. 98.

† F. :co.

them from the rude and ramping health of our people: I speak of the number of troops which have come from England, to bear witness to the political sanity of Ireland: I speak of that regimen of martial law, which the Legislature has just prescribed, to check the impudent frolics of an over-vigorous people, and prevent their health from becoming too plumpish. I could enumerate other symptoms, but should tire my Reader, and myself; and therefore shall conclude, by doubting whether the physis which you are for rejecting, be quite so unnecessary as you think it.

In page 100, (as I follow in your winding course) I find you recurring to the example of Scotland, and denying all similarity between our situation and hers.

Scotland, you tell us,* “by the junction of the crowns, “became subject to English influence, in all her internal “concerns:” their Darien settlement was destroyed by the jealous interference of England:† Scotch feelings were continually hurt, by the harassing proceedings of their “powerful and jealous rival,” who depressed their country in “her “trade, and in every thing of value in her state:”‡ and upon all these grounds, you conclude that Scotland had reason to accept an Union; and to expect in it, a remedy for the grievances above mentioned.

From Great Britain’s “partial conduct against this country,”§—from her having, “for forty years, monopolised our “victualing trade, by embargo,”¶ and from the oppressive and jealous tenor of her entire conduct, you conclude that an Union must injure Ireland.

Are the above arguments consistent? or, by which of them will you abide? If your premises were admitted, your

* P. 100.

† P. 101.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ P. 95.

¶ P. 97.

first reasoning would be the justest ; and would extend, to prove the utility of Union to this country.

But, in pointing out the dissimilarity of our situation to that of Scotland, you observe that she was connected with England, only by the *accidental* circumstance of the English Crown having descended upon her Monarch.* On this, allow me to observe, that as high-sounding phrases will not strengthen, neither can disparaging epithets diminish, the firmness of that connexion, by which two countries are held together. That connexion, which by styling it accidental, you imply to have been precarious, and unlikely to endure,—depended on a no less strong support, than those rules and maxims of hereditary descent, which in England and Scotland were the same, and which have lasted to the present day : and, if the Abdication of James II. and consequent Revolution, Act of Settlement, &c. had not operated on the British system a change as rare and violent, as it was useful,—(a change, against which, if they had happened to encounter, our sealing-wax and parchment would have made as ineffectual a stand, as the venerable rules of hereditary right,) I say, if this extraordinary change had not taken place, that Union of the English and Scottish Crowns, which had happened on the demise of Elizabeth, would have continued as long as there were heirs of the House of Stuart. And thus much for the durability of the Scotch and English connexion, (in the junction of their Crowns ;) as contrasted with that which holds these countries together ; accompanied with all its appendages—of Great Seal, Annexation Act, &c.

You deny that Scotland had a Constitution *like* Britain : § I might have controverted your position, though you had but denied her to have had substantially the same.—When a man asserts that an establishment, consisting of three estates,—a representative body, (particularly organized, but still representing the same class in the state, as our Commons do,) a chamber

* Page 100.

§ Page 101.

chamber of hereditary nobility, graduated analogously to those of England, and holding their titles by like grants, and with similar limitations,—an hereditary King, the chief Executive Magistrate, and possessing a right of negative on the proceedings of the Legislature,—that this establishment is not like the British Constitution:—I cannot argue with such a man; I can only express my surprise. The arrangement of 1706, however, has practically and successfully disputed your opinion; and by blending the Scottish Lords and Commons with the English, has recorded them to have been respectively homogeneous classes.

“ We,” however, “ are not only united to the Crown, “ but to the Empire: our friends, our enemies the same; “ and our interests, as well as laws, binding us in that “ Union.” *

Why then, in the name of Heaven, if a single flaw can be discovered—on which to fix a doubt of the permanence of our connexion,—should we shrink from consolidating it, by the most intimate incorporation?—We should thereby lose our free Constitution! I deny it. Prove to me that we shall; and I will vote against an Union. Meantime, you must allow me here to cite a passage from your Speech;† accompanying it with some qualifying parentheses of my own.

“ In preserving” *(the distinctness of)* “ this Constitution, we “ retain all the means of trade;” *(except capital, industry, internal quiet, and that stability of connexion, which may attract the capital of Britain:)* “ whereas, if we sacrifice it,” *(by blending our distinct establishment, with a system analogous in theory, and better administered in practice,)* “ wealth will vanish, when “ freedom is banished,” *(by our obtaining those privileges which secure it to Great Britain.)* We have more to lose than mere “ wealth, or trade: we have to lose sound genuine liberty,” *(by participating in all the privileges of the British Constitution.)*

In page 104, waving those arguments which you had founded on the alledged difference of our present situation, from that of Scotland at the period of the Union, you (for a moment) admit their similarity; but contend “that every argument drawn from the arrangement of 1706, strongly urges us against a similar experiment.”

You doubt whether the encreasing prosperity of Scotland, since the Union, is properly attributable to that event. It is difficult to prove the affirmative or negative of such a question; and besides, requires evidence, which neither you nor I possess. A comparison of the rates of Scottish progress, for fifty years before, and fifty years following the Union, would prove something. If that progress appeared infinitely accelerated in the latter period, it might seem presumable that that event had contributed to advance it; and this presumption would become still more violent, if it appeared, on investigation, that the interval between Scotch and English prosperity, had been greater before the Union, than it was since. For, that “progressive state of the world, for the last century,”† to which, rather than to this measure, you impute the prosperity of Scotland, would have operated in equal degree upon both countries; and therefore, the decrease of disparity between their greatness, would be fairly enough imputable to the Union. That arrangement would appear to have removed impediments to Scotch improvement; and by giving it the full use of whatever advantages it had from nature, to have enabled it to participate duly in the progress of the world.

“But has Scotland advanced in prosperity, since the Union, as much as Ireland?”* I presume not. Spite of whatever mischiefs were produced by Irish distinctness,—I presume not. This admission I concede not to your proof; but to my own conviction. Your demonstration is inadequate, and philosophical. You measure the relative progress of the two countries,

† Page 104.

* Ibid.

countries, by mere comparison of the advancement of their linen manufacture; without ascertaining whether this has predominated in Scotland, as with us: whether it has been equally the staple of both countries.

But I presume, the advancement of Ireland has been more considerable. I do not conceive Union to be a measure of sufficient efficacy, to efface the distinctions of natural advantage, and prevent the prosperity of a country from bearing some proportion to these. It is enough, if it removes all political obstacles to a country's greatness; and thus renders it more prosperous, than dissuaded it could have been. Ireland may be blessed with natural capacities, which have so far outweighed her political disadvantages, as, after all, to let her outstrip the prosperity of Scotland. But if united, I am satisfied she will leave her still more behind; and reap, at length, the full benefits of her soil and situation.

On the question, however, whence Scotch prosperity has arisen, I am content that we should make a compromise, if you think proper. I will abate somewhat of my certainty, that it has been produced by the Scottish Union, if you, on your part, will not so inexorably refer to the settlement of 1782, every advance which has been made by Ireland, since that period. || Suppose, that in fourteen years from 1782, Irish exports rose as much, as they had done in eighty years before: we know, that in the case of individuals, and of nations, improvement does not proceed regularly, but *per accelerates*: we know that the recent acceleration, of which you boast, may have arisen, not from the arrangements of 1782, but from that free trade of 1786, which an Union, instead of cramping, would practically promote: we *do not* know but a comparison in the case of Scotland, would turn out the same difference between her rates of progress, since, and previous to, 1782: We *do* know, that latterly, the advances of England have been incomparably more rapid, than they were before.

and that she may have hurried us along, as an Imperial Relative, in those strides. At all events you know (for you have stated) that “ the argument is shallow, which attributes every “ encrease of trade in Scotland, from that day to this, to the “ Union ;” * and the argument which is shallow, as to Scotland, cannot, as to Ireland, be more profound ; nor can the settlement of 1782 be entitled to a privilege, which you deny to the arrangement of 1706.

“ The question between England and Scotland,” (you say) “ was Union, or Separation ?” † I doubt whether, in the present case, the question be widely different ; and found my doubts on events too melancholy, and too notorious, for enumeration : I might find them on the mere reports of our Secret Committees ; and they would stand. But the proposed Union “ leads to Separation.” ‡ Prove this to its supporters, and I will answer for their conversion. Can you seriously imagine that the Minister, or the Legislature of Great Britain, would propose a measure which “ leads to Separation ?” What has brought the British Militia into Ireland ?---Would the government which sent those to fight, if necessary, for the connexion,---lend its hand to a measure which “ leads to Separation ?”---Nay, Sir, we should listen with distrust even to *arguments*, which were employed to prove any thing so incredible as this ; and so long as you confine yourself to mere paradoxical *assertion*,---spite of your merited weight, we cannot listen to you at all.

You ask, why Mr. Dundas “ has not told us the opinion of “ his countryman, Mr. Adam Smith, on the effects of the “ Scottish Union ?” §---I am sure I cannot tell.---He might, with perfect security, have resorted to his authority ; while, for you to quote it, appears rather indiscreet. Adam Smith has explicitly declared it as his opinion that, by an Union with Great Britain, Ireland would obtain not only commercial, but *other more important advantages* : that this measure would dry
up

* P. 104. † P. 107. ‡ Ibid. § P. 106.

up a source of discord and oppression ; and that “ without it, “ the inhabitants of this country were not likely, for ages, to “ consider themselves as one people.”* A writer who holds these sentiments with respect to Union, is not exactly the authority, which an Anti-unionist should choose to cite.

Having, in a Speech which I made in Parliament, in January last, and which has, since that time, appeared in print, discussed the question of Parliamentary Competence pretty fully, I shall, (without meaning to refer my reader to what has been said, or written, by so poor an authority as myself,) yet decline repeating here what I have thus already offered to the Public : ---and shall content myself, in answer to what you urge upon this head, with observing briefly---that to dispute the competence of Parliament, is to deny the constitutional existence of the united kingdom of Great Britain, and shake to its foundations his Majesty’s (not hereditary) title to his Scottish Crown ; nay may go to impeach the right of the House of Hanover (under the Act of Settlement) to the Throne of England :---that it is to contradict the express positions, as well as to subvert the consequential doctrines, of some of the ablest constitutional and legal writers ; including names no less respectable than those of Blackstone, Coke, and Montesquieu,---and operates to give inevitable admission to a Republican Principle, which will degrade Parliament from its high station, and erect a fierce and unwieldy multitude in the spoils of Legislative Supremacy.

The security of the subject against Parliamentary domination arises, not from the limited authority of the legislature, but from the frame and construction of Parliament itself ; in which the various and conflicting interests of the state are so well poised, as mutually to control the encroachments of each other : and if, spite of these precautions, a weak and wicked Parliament should yet abuse its vast authority,---it might thereby legitimate insurrection, and pull its own power about

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* Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Book V. c. 3.

its ears;---but with that power, would perish the whole fabrick of the Constitution: whilst this endures, the theoretick power of Parliament being unbounded, we are relieved from all preliminary trouble, of enquiring into its right of accomplishing any measure which is before it, and may proceed at once to investigate the merits of the plan itself;---since, in demonstrating its utility, we shall bring it within the sphere of parliamentary competence to achieve. It is a glorious prerogative of the British Constitution, that there is no political blessing for the people, which lies beyond the reach of their Parliament to obtain.

The grounds I have thus laid, Sir, will furnish a refutation of your hypothesis,* that if the omnipotence of Parliament can consolidate two separate Legislatures, it may equally consolidate the three estates of each; or take the purse of the nation out of the custody of the Commons.

No, Sir: this consolidation would be no blessing,---but a curse: a manifest subversion of the liberties of the people: such a measure is, on the face of it, so mischievous, and deformed, so repugnant not only to the principles, but to the very existence of our Constitution, that its adoption by Parliament must not, even in the way of hypothesis, be supposed: “there are points” (as you truly observe) “where the powers of the Legislature end,---and “those of the people, at large, begin;”† and it may be added, that such extreme cases can never furnish illustration:---it may be added, that, under no possible circumstances, could a consolidation of the three estates of the legislature be beneficial. But can it be contended---will you contend,---that under no supposable circumstances, on no devisable terms, could an incorporation of these two parts of the Empire be advantageous? And would our Parliament be then incompetent to obtain its benefits for the people?---Must we, as a preliminary step to its attainment, depose Parliament from its supremacy? and in doing so, dissolve the Government, and annihilate our whole establishment? You will not contend for so ruinous a doctrine; and, in abandoning it, will acknowledge Parliament to be competent to enact Union.

I have

* P. 108.

† P. 108.

I have now, Sir, (I hope, confidently with that respect, which is so justly due to you,) gone through your several arguments, *seriatim*; and given them such answers, as my small abilities could supply; but whether or not I have succeeded in refuting you, it is not for me, but for the Publick, to pronounce.

Let me here, while I am hastening to my conclusion, be allowed to introduce one or two observations, though not *directly* in answer to any thing which has fallen from you.

You have more than once contrasted the 120 Irish, with the 514 British representatives. Let us pursue that idea, by examining those contrasts, which the Parliament of this country will internally afford. The members for counties, cities, and commercial towns, will be found to form a small portion of the 300,---compared with those who sit for what we call *close* boroughs. The meaning of this epithet "close" it is not my business to determine; but I believe it is neither untrue, nor unparliamentary, to suggest, that this majority of our House of Commons does not more truly represent the landed and commercial interests of this country, than they are represented by the 64 county, and the city members. Now I have heard it said, and I believe with truth, that if an Union should take place, the system of Irish representation was likely to be modified in this respect,---that the entire number of county members remaining, and the principal commercial towns also returning representatives, the number of those who sit for boroughs would be materially abridged. Indeed it is plain they must be so; if the number of representatives secured to Ireland, by the terms of Union, be a hundred. For when from this sum we deduct 64 county members, and four representatives for cities, and commercial towns, the number remaining for borough members (by an arrangement resembling the Scotch, 1800) to make up, will be extremely limited. Thus the Irish portion of the Imperial Parliament would be composed wholly of the genuine representatives of our landed and commercial interests: of men whose own welfare was placed almost in the prosperity of their country. If Irish in Parliament were voted,

the benefit resulting to this country from such an organization, would be the more signal: for this abridgment of the comparative number of boroughs would prevent British money from gaining a seat amongst our Legislators; and would secure us a thoroughly Irish representation.

If this be so,---it seems to me that Union affords the only probable or secure path to those grand popular measures, of which for some years back we have heard so much. It might give Catholick Emancipation; and must produce Parliamentary Reform.

I imitate your example,* in declining those discussions, which regard the state of our religion in this kingdom; both, because I have on a former occasion† published my opinions on this subject, and because I concur with you, in considering it to be a delicate topick. Thus much however, may without impropriety be said;---that this country is not a scene of the most perfect religious concord: that Adam Smith has supposed Union would mitigate religious prejudice; and make the inhabitants of Ireland consider themselves as one people;---a consummation, which must be most devoutly wished, by every friend to the connexion, to the empire, to his country: that the temper and genius of the times are not such, as to render this the properest moment, for upholding an irritating system, with a strong hand: that the situation is arduous and perplexing,-- in which, while it may perhaps be dangerous to grant, it is not liberal, if perfectly safe policy, to withhold: that Union would extricate us from so embarrassing a dilemma,---by making the religion of the people, the religion of the state.

The tendencies of Union in other respects, I have, in the foregoing pages, had occasion to discuss. If these were such as you describe, I should heartily join with you to cry, No Union!‡ but, persuaded as I am, that its tendencies would be to baffle all attempts at separation: that by giving vigour to the Empire, it would give security to Ireland: that it might remove
some

* P. 111.

† From p. 65 to 74, of an Address to the People of Ireland. ‡ P. 107.

some of the risks, and difficulties, which obstruct sound and moderate religious, or political reform : that it would bring an orderly rank of persons in contact with the mass of our people ; and fill up, as it were, the chasms of our incoherent community : that it would, by their example, improve the morals of our lower ranks ; initiating them in industry, and communicating to them a taste for the decencies of life :---In a word, that it would raise and civilize our barbarous and degraded people ; and fit them to enjoy the freedom it conferred : that it would bury, in a complete identification of interest, whatever jealousies may have subsisted between the kingdoms ; would alluage that internal discord, of which we have so long been the victims,—and permanently enrich and tranquilize our country :---satisfied as I am, that such would be the effects of Union, I say to my Countrymen “ accept the offer ; and “ adhere to the Constitution of 1782.”*---Preserve the Constitution, which you then acquired : it must be invaluable ; for it is that of Britain : but abolish a distinction, which impedes the practical enjoyment of its blessings ; and is at variance with a connexion, on which your happiness depends.

I have the honour to be,

&c. &c. &c.

WILLIAM SMITH.

DUBLIN,
April 27th, 1799.

* “ Reject the offer ; and adhere to the Constitution of 1782 ”

Speaker's Speech—p. 107.

THE END.

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